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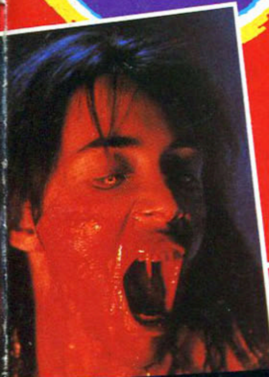

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GOREZONE

September 1988 GOREZONE #3

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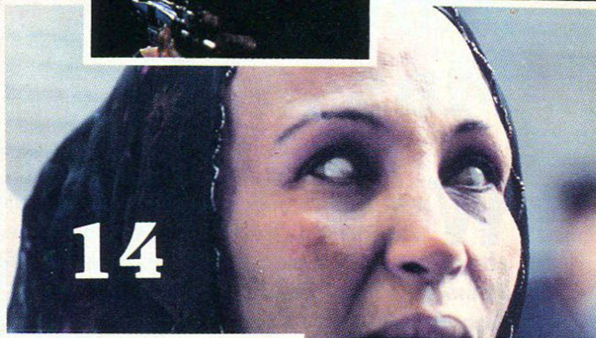

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BLOOD FEST

The Mediocre Movie Massacre

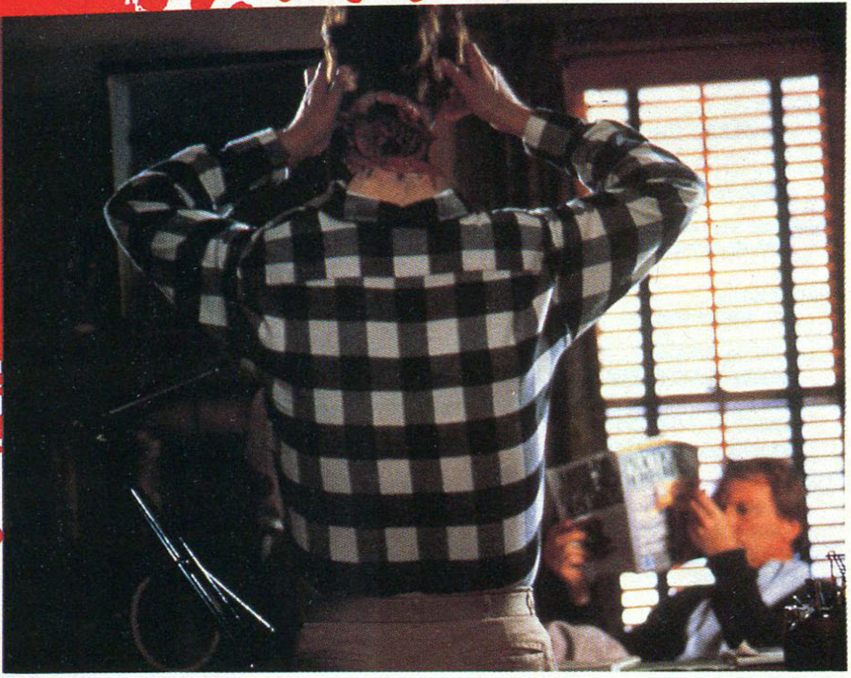
Photo: Copyright '88 The Geffen Co.

The critics hated it, but *Beetlejuice* is heads above other "horror comedies."

Wow! I don't believe it. The year is just over four months old (I'm writing this on May 4), and I've already seen 13 theatrical genre films: *The Serpent and the Rainbow*, *Prison*, *Dead Heat*, *Critters 2*, *The Unholy*, *The Seventh Sign*, *Jack's Back*, *Beetlejuice*, *Brain Damage*, *Lady in White*, *The Nest*, *Bad Dreams* and *Retribution*. Pass by any multiplex marquee for proof that horror is real hot right now. Video continues to benefit from the trend the most, while TV syndication is now jumping on the bandwagon. Great days for horror fans, right?

Wrong. The majority of these recent projects, especially the movies, just aren't cutting it. In stronger words, they truly stink. And the good stuff—*Brain Damage* and *Prison*—played one-tenth of the theaters that the bad *Bad Dreams* got. Where are they going wrong? Let's see.

THE "THIS IS NOT A HORROR FILM" SYNDROME

You heard this lame denial countless times in FANGORIA (see issue #68). And isn't it fitting that the filmmakers who made those pretentious statements turned in some of the year's biggest losers? *The Seventh Sign*'s director, Carl Schultz, rambled on about his yawnfest being a "mythological mystery thriller." The film's distributor, Tri-Star, showed little faith in his statement and lifted *The Omen*'s classic ad campaign in an attempt to sell it off as a horror movie. Have no fear, Carl, you didn't make one.

The makers of *The Unholy* originally didn't want to make a horror flick, either. Then they wanted another *Exorcist*. A hastily reshot demon ending failed to wake up the audience that I saw this slow-moving exercise with. Ditto *Retribution*, an independent that weighted itself down with "touching" character development and nuances when it was basically a slasher movie.

Now, *Dead Heat* should've been a winner. New World, however, wanted to sell this as an "action comedy." The film ultimately fails because no one knows what it's supposed to be—comedy, crime drama, horror, *Rambo* parody, zombie spoof, etc. *Dead Heat* tried to play too many sides of the fence. It could have been a scary film noir, but the creators opted for crude wisecracks from the obnoxious Joe Piscopo, an unwise attempt to snare a mainstream audience. I like my horror straight up.

DEARTH OF IDEAS

They say there are no original ideas left in Hollywood. *Critters 2*, *Demons 2*, *Bad Dreams* and *The Serpent and the Rainbow* would certainly lead you to believe that's true. There's nothing wrong with sequels if they're done right; *Critters 2* and *Demons 2* weren't. They're both retreads of their sources and offer nothing new to the genre. *Bad Dreams* shamefully steals from the *Nightmare* series, and its slickness fails to hide a derivative script. Craven's hallucination-heavy *Serpent* starts out great, then it winds up with a totally unnecessary Freddy-like ending. Wes, you don't have to keep remaking your biggest film each time out.

POOR DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING

Irony of ironies, this year's best genre films thus far have barely been released, relegated to a few major city openings: *Prison*, the suspense thriller *Jack's Back* (see page 12) and *Brain Damage*. *Brain Damage*, which comes out on Paramount Home Video July 13, had an awful *Scanners* ad campaign that spelled doom at the box office. Find these independents before they get forgotten.

All is not gloom and doom in horrorland. *Beetlejuice*, the movie that defies classification, turned out to be the year's surprise hit. It's an off-the-wall, totally weird flick that found an audience despite poor reviews and industry prejudice. The movie's success proves that you can make a hit without being a sequel or a clone of another blockbuster. If something as bizarre and original as *Beetlejuice* can make it at the box office, that's certainly good news for the genre.

—Anthony Timpone
Editor

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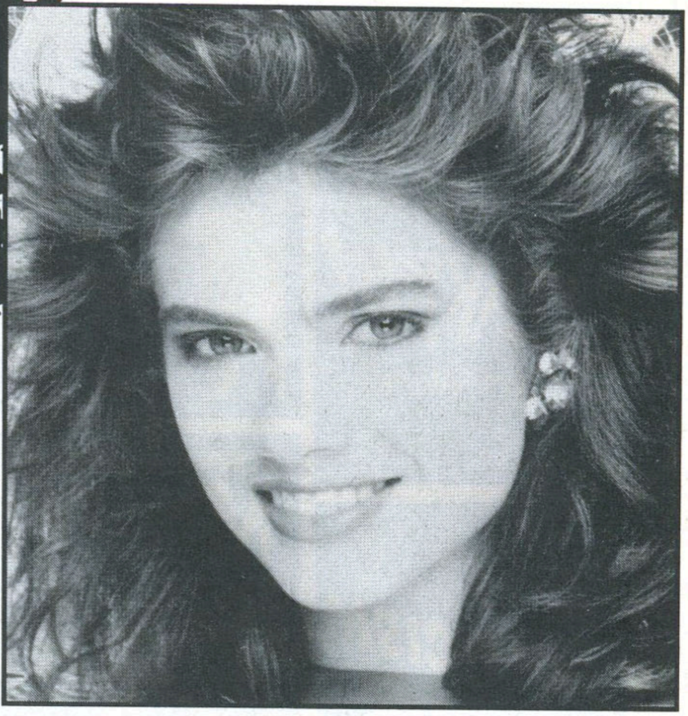


First GoreZonian to successfully negotiate complete global nuclear disarmament wins a date with Heather Langenkamp.

The Lynch Mob

. . . When I heard that actor Richard Lynch was starring in a new movie, *Bad Dreams*, I immediately went to the nearest bookstore to pick up a copy of your magazine. I have been trying to find an interview with Mr. Lynch for quite a few years and have come up with nothing. Nor have I been able to locate any background information on him. Therefore, I was extremely glad to find you had an article on *Bad Dreams* in both Fango and GOREZONE. But when I purchased both magazines and took them home to read, I could not believe there was *no* mention of Lynch other than his name!!!

Perhaps Jennifer Rubin and Gale Hurd are more important to this movie than Lynch, but I still think he deserves more mention than Philip Nutman gave him! I was very disappointed with these articles.

Karen Avola
East Northport, NY

We would love to interview Richard Lynch, and we in fact had a meeting set up, but he stood us up at the last moment. If we get a chance to reschedule the appointment, we'll definitely reconsider

Good boy, Watchdog

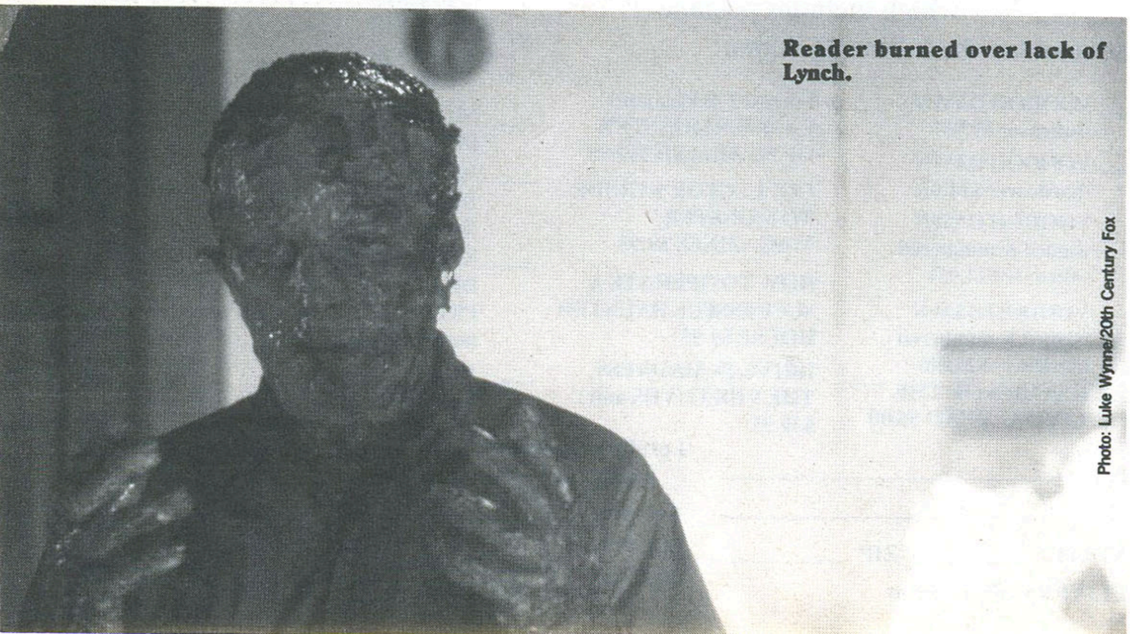
. . . One of my favorite features in GOREZONE #1 is Tim Lucas' Video Watchdog, which discusses the alterations made in videotape releases of feature films. I've always noticed differences between original theatrical releases and network TV screenings, syndicated versions and airline versions of films, so Tim's article was of particular interest to me. It's amazing how all that time and money can be spent on making changes in films when so much of it seems unnecessary.

George Stover
Baltimore, MD

Rave for the Lab

. . . By far the best feature in GOREZONE #1 is Caglione & Drexler's Makeup FX Lab. Drexler's advice in the second half of the column is simply excellent. As an aspiring filmmaker myself, I found his advice to be truly words to live by. This column should be mandatory reading for anyone who aspires to a career in film, no matter what area or field of cinema they're interested in. My sincere thanks to Dr. Drexler for his heartfelt and extremely invaluable counsel. I'm going to make it in film if it kills me, and I've got Forry Ackerman & now Doug Drexler to thank for inspiration I couldn't find elsewhere.

Jay M. Bullbear
Homing, OK



Reader burned over lack of Lynch.

Photo: Luke Wynne/20th Century Fox

Our Funny Uncle

. . . GOREZONE? Meaningful title, guys. (Of course, I remember when people used to ask me if Fango was named after some disease.)

Issue one looked like a good start; issue two seemed to indicate growth in a positive direction. Keep this up and you might have a contender. Especially, keep using guys like Michael Weldon and Tim Lucas, both of whom would have been in Fango more often some years ago, if I hadn't been so busy typing up free classified ads.

Just one thing: Drop those dumb posters. Yeah, I know—the publishers say that gimmicks sell. I'd rather have a bound-in vomit bag.

"Uncle" Bob Martin
Broslin Press
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From Our Spleen to You

In GOREZONE #2, we devoted most of the letters column to answering questions from the premiere issue's reader poll. Since the response was positive, we've decided to make this a regular feature until we get enough mail to do away with it.

What does the word "genre" mean?

It's Russian for "bedroom eyes"—no, just kidding. In fact, it's a French word meaning a group of thematically similar artistic works. When we use the term, we're referring to all horror films as a *whole, but other examples would be the detective genre and the science fiction genre.*

How do you put out such a good magazine in such a short period of time?

Well, thank you! We often wonder the same thing. It's just regular hard work, spurred on by our cheerful publishers and this guy with a whip who lives in our closet.

What do you think of censorship groups like the PMRC?

How do you feel about athlete's foot? These swine are a disease (although in some cases a well-intentioned one) upon the American way of life. You and I do not have an obligation to live according to the criteria some zipperhead draws up for his children. If these dupes don't like freedom of expression, let them move to any of 100 other countries where the government will gladly tell them what they can and cannot watch on their VCRs.

Why don't you print more posters?

We've already gotten several readers complaining that there are too many posters! Actually, it would be hard to get enough photos to use if we ran more pinups. Check out FANGORIA POSTER MAGAZINE #3, on sale July 26, which features 10 16" x 22" fold-outs.

What music do you like best?

Tony Timpone likes Morrissey, Peter Gabriel and New Order, Peter Orr likes Vivaldi and the Birthday Party, Dave McDonnell is a folkie, everybody else listens to film soundtracks. And of course, we all love the Misfits.

Will GOREZONE print book reviews?

Nope, that's Fango's job.

Do you have a single 40-year-old, good-looking Italian gentleman on your staff who would be interested in a 30-year-old, gorgeous, tattooed, twice-divorced stripper with an eye towards marriage?

Doesn't everyone?

What's the best way to murder my sister?

C'mon, now. GOREZONE and FANGORIA are only for people who can tell make-believe from reality. If you kill somebody—even your creepy sister who jammed your Dawn of the Dead *tape and scratched your Metallica albums—you'll wind up in prison, or in the electric chair, or worse yet, your parents won't let you read GOREZONE anymore.*

7?

This is our favorite question this month. For pure abstract weirdness, you can't beat it. After serious deliberation, we've decided to answer it with a resounding, "12!"

Where do you get the photos?

From a variety of sources. For current releases, we receive shots from the productions themselves. (Why can't you get pictures like that?' Cos you're not a magazine, dummy.) For older films, we rely on collectors, like our good friends Bill George and Stephen Jochsberger.

Will Jason Voorhees die?

Only if he bores himself to death.

Is it true you need a sick mind to do a magazine like this? That's what my dad says.

Oh, yeah? And what does your old man do that makes him so high and mighty? Sounds like a real geek to us.

Will you print Heather Langenkamp's address?

No, and while we're on the topic, if we could set up dates with Heather Langenkamp, Kristy Swanson, Caroline Munro, Phoebe Cates, Caroline Williams, Linnea Quigley or any other movie stars, we'd be running a dating service, not a magazine.

Why do you call GOREZONE a "splatter" magazine?

Have you looked through it? Sure, horror means much more than just evisceration, but GOREZONE was designed for the gorehound who can't get enough. If it's too strong, stick with Fango. If Fango's too strong, subscribe to Smurf Digest.

Why not do GOREZONE on full glossy paper?

Alas, that's one of those things beyond our control. In the course of getting a magazine published, our fine administrators must make many compromises. The newsprint in the first issue was one of them. The glossy stock of the second ish cheered us up.

Is a psychological evaluation mandatory for employment at O'Quinn Studios?

Now, just what is that *supposed to imply, bud? Matter of fact we're a pretty healthy bunch, thanks to the liberal local juvenile delinquency laws.*

Can you introduce me to Elvira?

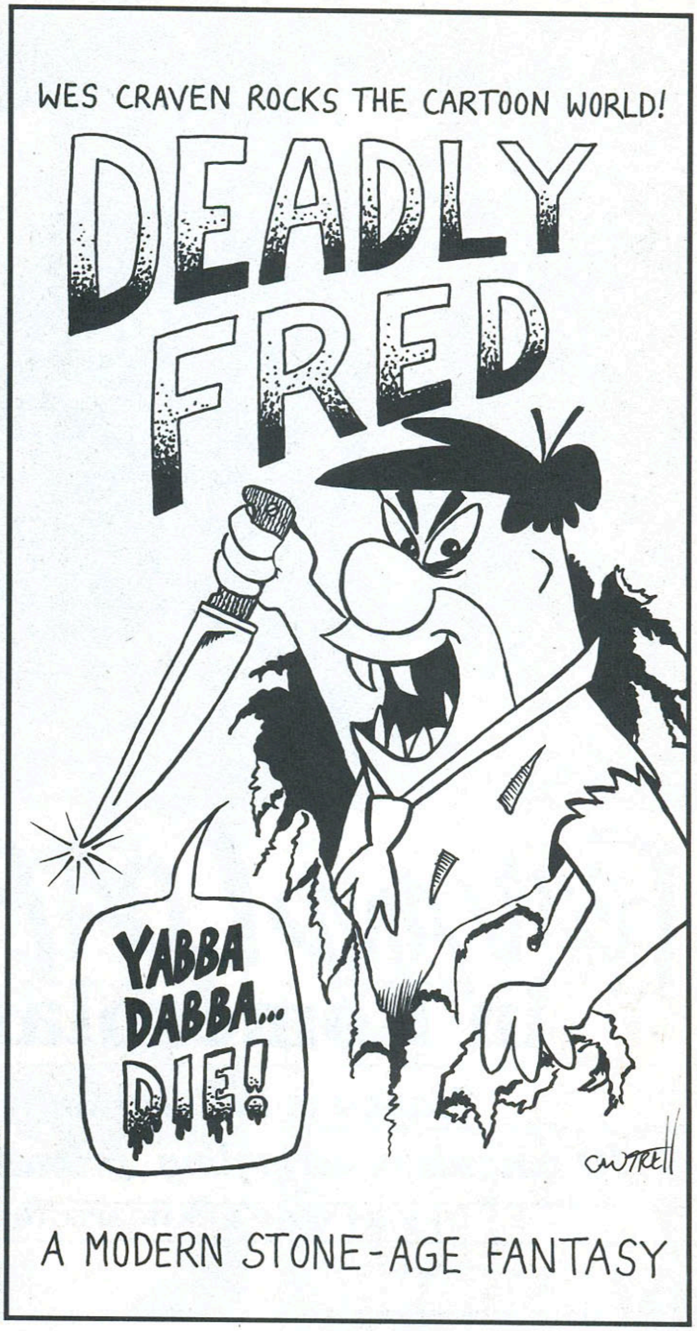
What's the matter with you, weren't you paying attention four questions ago? No.

How's it hanging?

Not bad, dude. How's it hanging with you?

Why does GOREZONE cost so much?

Listen, if it were up to us, we'd give the magazine away for free. But bills must be paid, gang, it's a lousy fact of life. Besides, $3.50 isn't so bad. Some specialty shops overseas charge $10.00 a copy.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Why do you like things that are very gory?

Somebody's gotta.

Do you give tips?

Only to waitresses.

How can I meet all the actors and directors?

Come to the FANGORIA Weekend of Horrors. Did you catch the one in LA last April? If not, you missed George Romero, John Russo, Tom Savini, Tony Perkins, Tobe Hooper, Clive Barker, Joe Dante, Linnea Quigley, Angus Scrimm, Roddy McDowall, Gary Brandner, John Buechler and the legendary Dick Miller. Don't miss next year's.

Remember, address your letters and cartoons to GOREZONE Gut Reactions, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. Include a SASE if you want something returned. Include a request for some famous person's phone number or address if you want us to laugh and throw out your letter. Sorry, no personal replies.

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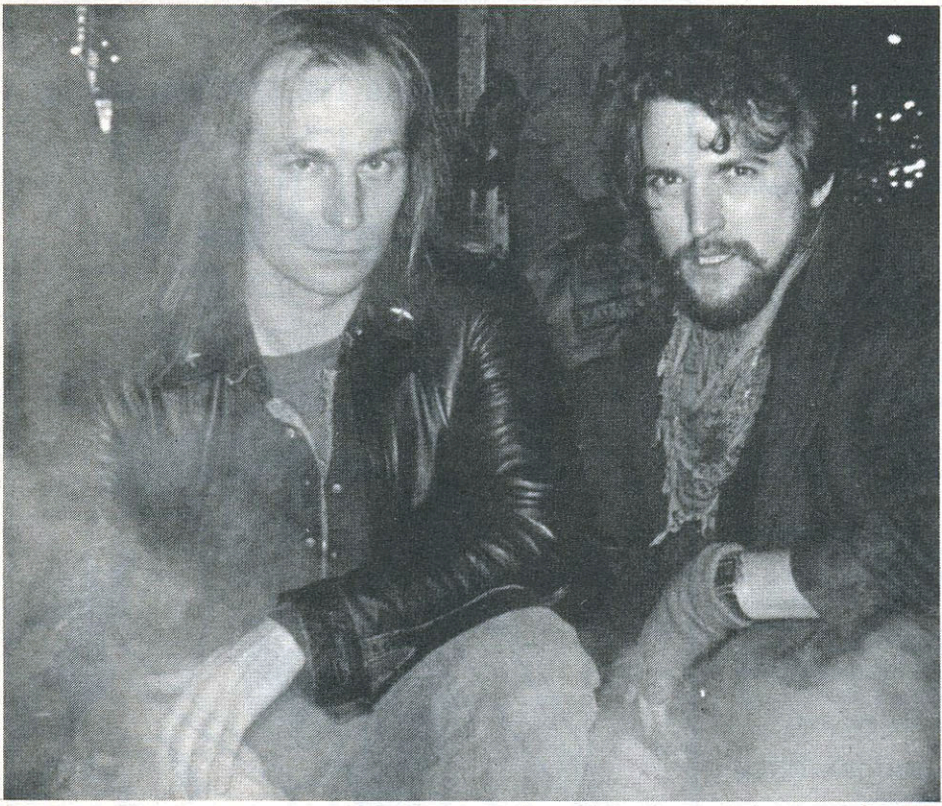


John Skipp (left) & Craig Spector conquered the literary world with *The Light at the End*. Can they handle Pittsburgh?

FEAR AND LOAFING in Romeroland

"Mango is the real thing, 10 pounds of wriggling primate fury."

By JOHN SKIPP & CRAIG SPECTOR

We're sitting on the stairs at Allan Mann's house, which is odd when you consider that there is no such person or place. Allan's the quadriplegic main character of *Monkey Shines*, and as such, George Romero and the gang have built him a lovely new home. It's an old-style Pennsylvania farmhouse that doesn't look a bit like the soundstage it actually is, if you overlook the miles of cables and dozens of sneaker-clad people passing through, hanging lights overhead, and occasionally moving a wall or two.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Readers are familiar with the standard set visit format, where we send a responsible correspondent onto the shoot to interview everyone involved. This piece is the result of an experiment in which we addressed the question: What if we dispatch the successful authors of* The Light at the End *and* The Scream *on location to an important genre production like* Monkey Shines*. . . and then let them goof off?*

The whole house has been built in components, you see, so that any wall, any floor section, any ceiling panel can be lifted out or taken down. This is not surprising, given the fact that we're in movieland.

What *is* surprising is the degree of detail, the believability of the room. We are amazed. We've been in old Pennsylvania houses before; hell, we've even lived in a few. We've seen the corny prints on the walls and the funky-clunky furniture and the dustballs in the corners. And here they are, down to the tiniest tacky knicknack. This shit is *thorough*.

In the middle of the living room floor, a dead John Pankow is cracking jokes. This isn't unusual, either. An hysterically funny guy, Pankow's one of those rare individuals who remember every *Far Side* cartoon they've ever seen. While director of photography James Contner and his crew set up the next shot and leading lady Kate McNeil prepares for her own bout with death, Pankow recounts a Wild West vulture banquet, Gary Larson-style. (One of the vultures is wearing a 10-gallon hat and saying "Howdy howdy howdy! Hey, everybody! Lookit me! I'm a cowboy! Howdy howdy howdy!").

Then it's time to shoot, and the set grows quiet. First assistant director Nick Mastandrea sees to that. Later, we would discover that he's a very nice man; on the set, however, he is George Romero's evil twin, barking orders, physically reeling in every inch of slack, while George sits on the couch, watching and pondering the next move.

George Romero, it should be noted, is the Gentle Ben of horror, a great big friendly bear of a guy, his good will on the set matched only by the serious intelligence he brings to the task at hand. If anything, he looks tired. Then again, so does everybody else. First lesson of filmland: Exhaustion rules.

Kate McNeil takes her place on the floor next to the now-silent Pankow. It is time for her to wrassle with one of the monkey dummies that Tom Savini and Everett Burrell whipped up for the occasion. It is, as you'd expect, wonderfully authentic. This li'l buddy has come equipped with a teeth-baring snarl and a coat hanger in its fuzzy little hand. The hanger is a wooden job, *Mommie Dearest* be praised, though Psycho Joan might just pop a wheelie in her grave if she could see what the monkey is using it for.

Romero speaks one word, almost a whisper: *"Action."*

The camera rolls. Pankow gets real dead, real fast. McNeil thrashes on the floor beside him, whipping the fake monkey around viciously, bringing the hanger within inches of her face, whimpering in mock-struggle until George speaks again: *"Cut."*

They stop. Everyone laughs and nods. They set it back up and do it again.

And again.

And again.

Photo: Richard Golomb/Copyright '88 Orion

Eventually, everyone is satisfied with the fake monkey footage. The call goes out for the next setup. Time to bring in the big guns—*Mango*. McNeil grimaces. Mango is the real thing, 10 pounds of wriggling primate fury. Mango makes McNeil very nervous. We soon find out why.

McNeil is supposed to wrestle with Mango, just like she did with the prop. The prop was utterly indifferent; Mango, on the other hand, doesn't like it one bit. Neither does McNeil. A match made in heaven, if ever there was one.

The following minutes are extremely tense. We had heard that working with the monkeys was often a pain in the tush, and now the logic of this comes clear. Mango doesn't understand that he's in a movie. All he knows is that his friends Alison Pascoe, Chris Handlin and Alice Levee (the monkey wranglers and trainers) are maneuvering him on top of a human every bit as terrified as he is. "Grab his hands," Pascoe tells McNeil, who reluctantly obliges.

Mango begins to scream.

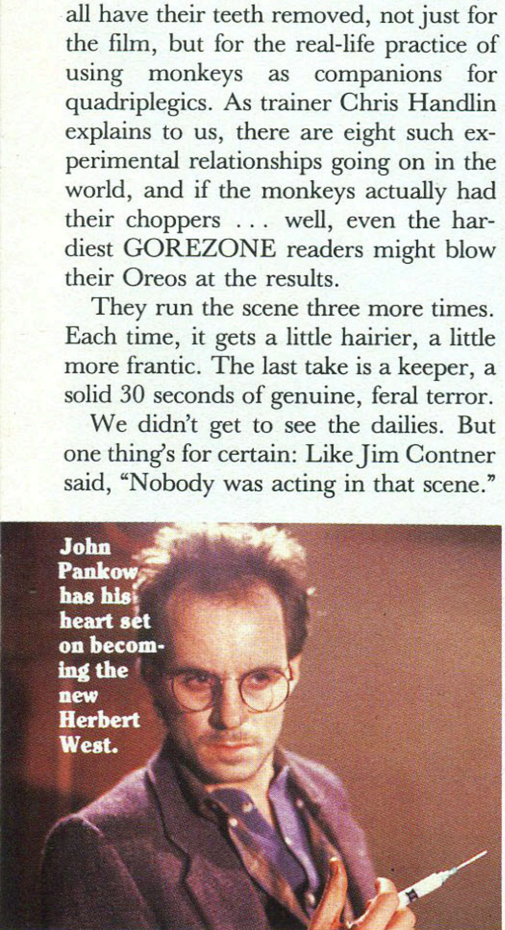
"*Action.*"

The camera rolls. McNeil and Mango become a ball of furious howling motion in the middle of the living room floor. How John Pankow manages to stay still throughout is beyond our comprehension. About five seconds in, McNeil panics, and George yells, "Cut!" Mango has bitten her hand.

You can understand why the monkeys all have their teeth removed, not just for the film, but for the real-life practice of using monkeys as companions for quadriplegics. As trainer Chris Handlin explains to us, there are eight such experimental relationships going on in the world, and if the monkeys actually had their choppers . . . well, even the hardiest GOREZONE readers might blow their Oreos at the results.

They run the scene three more times. Each time, it gets a little hairier, a little more frantic. The last take is a keeper, a solid 30 seconds of genuine, feral terror.

We didn't get to see the dailies. But one thing's for certain: Like Jim Contner said, "Nobody was acting in that scene."



John Pankow has his heart set on becoming the new Herbert West.

An introspective moment finds our favorite capuchin mulling over career moves.

Photo: Myles Aronowitz/Copyright '88 Orion

Photo: Richard Golomb/Copyright '88 Orion

Kids, don't try this at home.

Things are mellow, by comparison, in the makeshift FX lab, where Savini and Burrell are killing time and trading insults. They are between scenes, FX-wise. A row of spare Ellas perches on one shelf, each with interchangeable heads, all awaiting the call. Savini tinkers with a part of his Halloween costume, a pair of very authentic chain-mail gauntlets. He's going to be a 7-foot-tall demonic warrior, replete with breastplate, broadsword and 2-inch horns. We introduce ourselves. Savini immediately demands that we autograph the copy of *The Cleanup* we've brought him, then bums a cigarette off Skipp. McNeil pops in, bedraggled and beautiful, and plops down in the ancient barber's chair to await a fresh set of teeth marks on her hand.

Watching these guys work is like getting invited into the secret clubhouse. They are surrounded by toys—Alien models, weird latex heads, Lazer Tag pistols—while a VCR in the corner plays tapes constantly: *The Elephant Man*, *Blade Runner*, even a copy of the Savini *Scream Greats* video.

Boy, the stories we could tell of the happy hours we wiled away there trading insults (it's contagious), playing Scrabble, digging through forensic pathology textbooks (everybody's favorite was Mr. Page 511, a guy who killed himself by use of a phallic sex aid the size of Schwarzenegger's biceps), and watching them administer spurting wounds with easy professionalism.

Unfortunately, we're almost out of space. Buy us a beer sometime, we'll tell ya all about it.

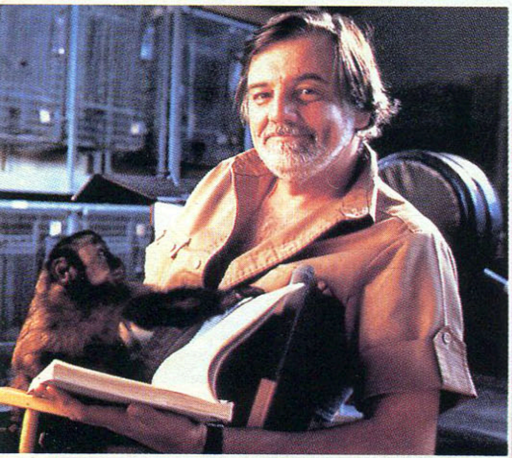


Photo: Myles Aronowitz/Copyright '88 Orion

Mango reads Uncle George a bedtime story. Or maybe a chairtime story.

The next thing we know, it's 9:00 p.m. and shooting's over for the day. We retire to the impromptu screening room for beer, pizza, and a look at the dailies from two days before. Sitting next to Chris Romero, who explains where we are in the story (and who is every bit as warm and gracious as her husband George), we watch innumerable takes of an amazing sequence between Allan (Jason Beghe) and Ella, his capuchin nemesis.

In this scene, Allan has just discovered the body of Geoffrey (John Pankow). Trapped in his wheelchair, cut off from the world and any hope of assistance, completely at the mercy of a power-mad and murderous monkey, he launches into a white-knuckled monologue while Ella stuffs Simian Snacks, one after another, into his mouth.

"You wanna be friends?" he says, making nicey with his voice as he spits out the monkey treats. "We'll be friends.

Jason Beghe reconsiders his permissive stand on animal vivisection.

Photo: Richard Golomb/Copyright '88 Orion

"Why is my hand bandaged if the monkeys have no teeth?" inquires Pankow.

Whatever it takes. . . whatever it takes to get us through the night. Your ass is grass. Somehow, some way, I'm gonna stop your clock. . ."

There is a chemistry at work—a combination of the blue-black nightflesh of Jim Contner's cinematography, the intensity of Jason Beghe's performance (comparable in kilowatt power to Ed Harris' King Billy in *Knightriders*), the primal purity implicit in the script itself—that gives this scene a breathtaking ferocity.

For 12 hours, we've let George Romero and a very competent and highly trained crew expose us to all the illusions of the craft, and to no avail. Because when the lights go out and the film rolls, it's all magic again. On our way out, we meet up with Chris Handlin and Everett Burrell. Mango is riding Handlin's shoulder, his leash dangling loosely from her wrist. The day's ordeal forgotten, Mango is Mr. Happy now. As we stand in the set bay talking, he jumps onto Spector's shoulder and begins nuzzling, climbing up and down in his arms, begging to wrestle. Spector cradles him in the crook of his arm like a baby and tickles him; Mango exhibits a toothless, gummy, old man's grin.

"Hey, I think he likes you," Handlin says.

"Looks more like love to me," Skipp replies.

Mango sits up in Spector's grasp, still grinning, sporting a capuchin-sized tulip-tipped man-thang in full deployment. "Hubba, hubba," Spector laughs. "Must be my animal magnetism."

For the end of *that* story, it'll cost you another two beers.

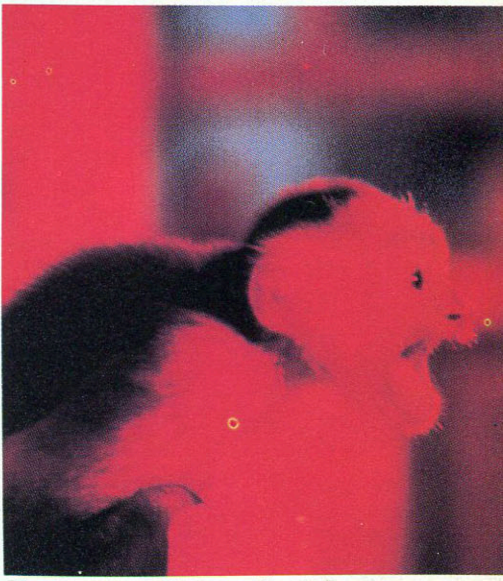


Photo: Myles Aronowitz/Copyright '88 Orion

Mango gets a glimpse of hunk Spector.

JACK'S BACK

> *"...no difference between [this film] and many of the low-budget slashers...except that it has good acting, intelligence and a plot."*

By MICHAEL GINGOLD

With the decline in popularity of its more exploitative examples, the slasher genre has moved upmarket in the last couple of years. Spurting blood and screaming teenyboppers have been replaced with an emphasis on psychological suspense. Last year, the result was *The Stepfather*, one of the best horror films of this decade; now, Palisades Entertainment (formerly Cinema Group) has brought us two more pseudo-slashers: *White of the Eye*, a very strange reworking of the stalker film as domestic drama, and a more straightforward and successful thriller called *Jack's Back*.

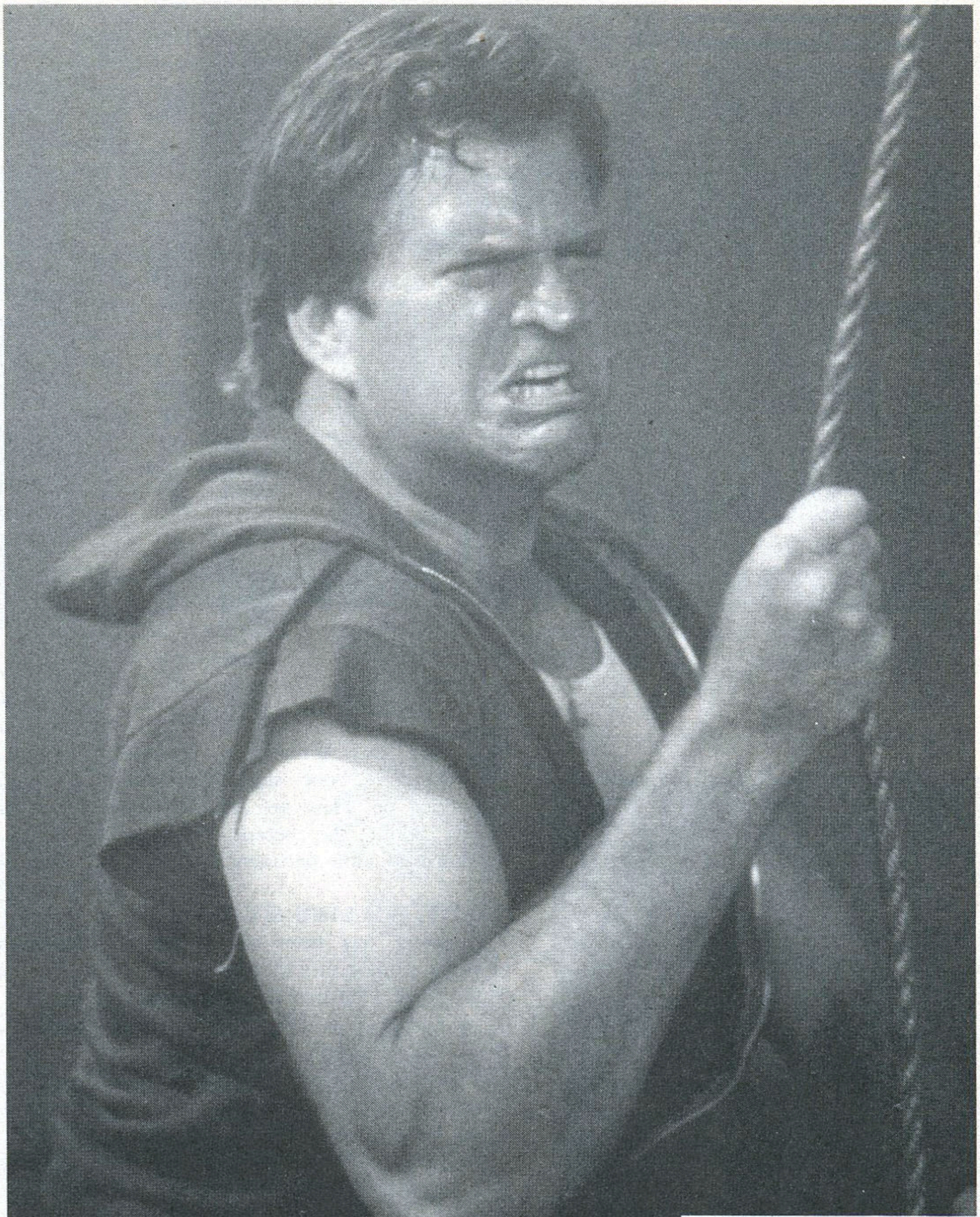
The title refers to a series of crimes perpetrated by someone duplicating Jack the Ripper's murder spree. The killer has been striking 100 years to the day after each of the Ripper's slayings, attacking the same type of victim (all prostitutes) and even duplicating the degree of mutilation. On the day that the last murder seems set to take place, we are introduced to John Wesford (James Spader), a doctor at a Los Angeles free clinic. In the first of the film's unusual structural twists, the story seems to hit its climax at the end of the first reel, as John comes upon the new Ripper at the scene of his final crime and pursues him through the city. There's a fight that ends in death, and then—cut to John lurching awake in his bed. Hey, wait a second, you mean this has all been a *dream*? What a cheap trick!

Well, there is a trick involved, but it's not cheap at all. Rather, it's one of several surprises in the screenplay by Rowdy Herrington, who's been a gaffer on a

A victim of Ripper '88.

Photos: John Naulin

The filmmakers played down John Naulin's (with J. Spiner) splatter FX.



Red herring or Ripper? Writer-director Rowdy Herrington keeps you guessing.

number of features (most recently *Nightflyers*). Herrington also makes his directorial debut with *Jack's Back*, and he shows quite a bit of promise. Here he's worked a number of twists into what appears at first to be formula stuff, and those who want to fully appreciate them should skip the next two paragraphs.

As it turns out, that wasn't John we saw waking up; it was his twin brother Rick (also played by Spader). The movie posits the idea that twins share a bond that sometimes causes one to have visions of what the other sees at the moment of his death. That's what Rick was dreaming about, and the next few reels concern his hunt for his brother's killer, assisted by Christine (Cynthia Gibb), John's attractive co-worker from the clinic. Here's where the story slows down—too much, as it turns out, for by pulling all his tricks in the first third, Herrington doesn't leave any for the midsection. He keeps things moving, and there are a few well-staged action and suspense scenes, but for the most part the outcome seems to be a given, so that when it happens it's not as thrilling as it could have been.

But wait: Herrington still has a few surprises up his sleeve, and *Jack's Back* turns out to be one of those movies where just when you think everything's been wrapped up, the story throws you a curve and suddenly takes off in a new direction. Fortunately, the reversal works here because it seems logical in the context of what has gone before, and the film kicks into gear again on the way to its conclusion. There's also a revelation involving one of the characters that offers the pleasing feeling of, "Hey, that makes sense. Why didn't I figure it out myself?"

With the help of cinematographer Shelly Johnson, Herrington gives the film eerie atmosphere, though there's a bit too much diffused lighting a la Tony Scott. The violent scenes are well-staged, and although there's little actual gore (some of the messier scenes were reportedly trimmed), there are a couple of effectively gruesome moments courtesy of *Re-Animator* FX honcho John Naulin.

Still, some people might argue that this isn't "really a horror film." It's a suspense thriller, they'll say. But there's really no difference between *Jack's Back* and many of the low-budget slashers of the early '80s, except that it has good acting, intelligence and a plot.

And as an extra bonus for fright fans, there's a rare chance to catch actor Robert (*The Howling*) Picardo unobscured by pounds of Rob Bottin makeup. Here he plays a police psychiatrist who may or may not have some connection to the killer, an element of the story played with an ambiguity that is especially pleasing in this age of show-all and tell-all filmmaking.

Back Photos: Keith Af Gordon

James Spader takes the Jimmy Stewart role in *Jack's Back*.

Video WATCHDOG

Finally, Some Good News!

By TIM LUCAS

Video isn't limited to cassettes; therefore, nor shall the Video Watchdog be. Here are some exciting details about the recent cable appearances of some pertinent movies.

READY, WILLING & CABLE:

Cinemax has been airing an interesting catalog of Columbia titles, including such Hammer and William Castle productions as *The Pirates of Blood River*, *Scream of Fear*, *Zotz!*, *These Are the Damned* and *The Tingler*. This may show insight on their part, but Cinemax has been stingy with their scheduling, limiting them to only two or three showings per month, and in inconvenient timeslots, to boot. To make matters worse, *These Are the Damned* (Joseph Losey's original cut, no less) had a habit of starting 10 minutes earlier than each of its scheduled showtimes.

The Tingler was shown thrice last January, but only for its second airing did Cinemax bother to broadcast the bathroom scene in color. Close examination of their print shows that Columbia used computer technology to improve on Castle's original effect, prior to producing their video master. Original prints show that Castle had his bathroom set painted beige, while actress Patricia Cutts was painted with beige pancake makeup and dressed in beige clothing, leaving only the white porcelain of the sink and tub untouched. In this way, when the preceding black-and-white footage was tinted beige, the appearance of red blood dripping from the taps was dramatically effective. The only giveaway was the actress' green eyes in a close-up.

The Columbia master aired by Cinemax deleted the tint entirely, so that the bloody red hand now reaches from the bathtub into a traditional, silvery, monochromatic background. The outline of the color portion of the image was apparently traced by computer and then flawlessly matted into a pristine B&W print. It's most effective, and I'm sure Castle would have approved this bit of cosmetic surgery. Too bad Cinemax only had the sense to air it once!

Meanwhile . . . WTBS, Ted Turner's Atlanta-based SuperStation, has also been getting into the act with surprise editions of movies. They've acquired from Warner Bros. a number of Hammer films in their original British versions, beautifully struck from the original 35mm negatives. Aside from their tremendous visual improvement over the fading 16mm prints we usually see, they haven't differed much in the way of content—with one notable exception. Several viewers of a recent Saturday morning broadcast of *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* were startled to find the Peter Cushing/Veronica Carlson rape scene (never before shown in the U.S.) amazingly intact. Keep an eye on those *TV Guides*!

AMPUTATED BOOTLEGS:

Some of you may have noticed a video phenomenon that's caught my eye, the appearance in certain American video stores of bootleg cassettes of British releases. Two examples that spring readily to mind are *City of the Living Dead* and *Dracula's Virgin Lovers*, both of which are contained in English boxes and bear plain labels attributing manufacture to Iver Film Services, Ltd.—"The Professionals at Pinewood." Hmmm, sure.

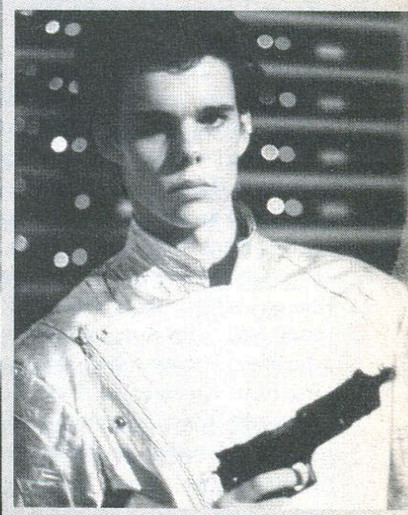
City of the Living Dead is Lucio Fulci's *The Gates of Hell*, domestically available from Paragon Video. *Dracula's Virgin Lovers* turns out to be *Dracula's Great Love*, released here by Gorgon Video in a frustratingly choppy, 72-minute TV version they've been unable to replace. The picture quality of the bootlegs is a toss-up; they look grainy, as befits a PAL to NTSC transfer, but they also reproduce the full widescreen frame, adding a good deal of visual information cropped out of their American counterparts.

City betrays its U.K. origins by snipping out the climax of the head-drill

Photo: Courtesy Stephen Jochsberger

Despite a few graphic moments, the bootleg *Dracula's Virgin Lovers* doesn't hack it.

"The Zanti Misfits" march to video.



Kevin Dillon saves the world in *Remote Control*. This summer, he saves the world again in *The Blob* (see page 18).

scene in true "Video Nasty" fashion. (I've always wanted to see this amazing effect in widescreen, too, because the twirling drill bits are cropped offscreen in the Paragon release.)

Dracula's Great Love is one of my favorite Spanish horror films—not great, but silly, compelling and always fun—and the possibility of someday seeing an uncut print is one of those little daydreams that keeps me going, so I was excited to find *Dracula's Virgin Lovers*. It contains several brief scenes of violence and nudity not present in Gorgon's tape, but it's also culled from the most mutilated print I've ever seen reproduced on tape. The last 20 minutes are particularly choppy, and the running time is a preposterous 66 minutes!

ONE-LINERS:

Academy Entertainment's *Sisters of Satan* (now $19.95) is actually *Alucarda*, an intense, deliriously beautiful "possession" movie directed by the talented Mexican filmmaker Juan (*Dr. Tarr's Torture Dungeon*) Moctezuma. Do not confuse with MPI Home Video's *Sisters of Satan*, which is *not* the same film and is, at $59.95, considerably more expensive . . . Would you believe Lightning Video's misleadingly titled *Manhattan Baby* is really Lucio Fulci's *Eye of the Evil Dead*? . . . Video City's *Death Nurse*, starring the incredible Priscilla Alden, is another crummy-looking, shot-on-video "sequel" to trash classic *Criminally Insane*, but take heart: It's much funnier than *Crazy Fat Ethel II* . . . Genesis Video's *Revenge of the Zombie* is not the notorious 1977 Chinese "human-milk vampire" movie of the same name, but a 1980 American film with Marilyn Burns and Fabian Norte . . . In Media's new cassette of Jack Sholder's *The Hidden*, you can actually see the blue air cushion billow into the frame at the bottom left side of the screen when the alien falls from the rooftop in his female guise!

Horror Castle's rat cage sequence still ranks with the most extreme scenes of horror ever dared on the screen.

A WAG OF THE TAIL:

Because video advertising tends to concentrate heavily on major releases of oft-times insignificant films (e.g. *The Lost Boys*), many important releases go unnoted by the press and unrecognized by the public. The following releases have been singled out by the Video Watchdog for their special interest value.

The Fourth Man (Tamarelle's International): If you liked what Paul Verhoeven did with SF in *RoboCop*, you should see what he does with horror in this brilliant Argentoesque film. A paranoid writer (Jeroen Krabbe) is seduced into the web of a thrice-widowed hairdresser (Renee Soutendijke), who he believes is priming him for the altar and her fourth act of murder. Media has been distributing this film on cassette for a few years, albeit in a lackluster dubbed version. Tamarelle's, a new label, has finally issued it in the original Dutch with English subtitles. If you're only familiar with the dubbed edition, several new, deliciously unnerving subtleties will surface for you here.

The Invaders (Twin Towers): Of interest to horror fans because this is actually horror *maestro* Mario Bava's *Erik the Conqueror* (1961). An excellent, flamboyant action film, it is leavened with violent swordplay and colorful, fetishistic women-in-peril sequences. Cameron Mitchell stars as one of two orphaned brothers, separated as children by war, who meet again as adults leading opposing armies. As an unexpected bonus, Twin Towers makes the film available in its original form for the first time, with Roberto Nicolosi's score (the U.S. edition was rescored by Les Baxter) and much footage—including one entire character!—never before seen in this country. The transfer quality ranks with the best I've seen; the colors are absolutely breathtaking. Twin Towers says they'll be announcing the releases of other classics from the Italian Golden Age soon and I, for one, can hardly wait. (By the way, Bava's other seldom-seen Viking film, *Knives of the Avenger* (1967), has popped up on cassette under the title *Viking Massacre*, available from Mega Video.)

The Outer Limits, Volumes 7-9 (MGM/UA): The latest video releases from this beloved series are "Demon with a Glass Hand," "The Zanti Misfits" and "Keeper of the Purple Twilight." "Demon" is often regarded as the zenith of the program's achievement, an award-winning Harlan Ellison teleplay directed by Byron (*War of the Worlds*) Haskin. "Misfits" has gone down in history as the scariest *OL* episode, pitting Bruce Dern against an invasion of hair-raising, human-faced ants, the exiled criminals of the planet Zanti. You owe it to yourself to own both. MGM/UA has reduced the price of these new *OL* episodes to a more affordable $14.95.

Photo: Courtesy Stephen Jochsberger

Cheers for *The Tingler*'s new bathtub scene, the best computer-generated color yet.

Will Peter Cushing ever get it through their thick skulls that we want more unedited Hammer films on TV?

Remote Control (IVE): As a confirmed, dyed-in-the-wool admirer of *Squirm*, *Blue Sunshine* and *Just Before Dawn*, I've been waiting for director Jeff Lieberman to resurface for seven long years. This (deep swallow) is it. Jeff, where have you been all these years? A group of teens rent a '50s science-fiction flick—titled *Remote Control*, what else?—on video, which causes them to become "murderously possessed." It's a clever, welcome return.

Shadowman (Fox Hills): Georges Franju's 1975 *Crimson Nights*, a feature-length condensation of his French miniseries *The Man Without a Face*, is another must-see from the maker of the classic *Horror Chamber of Dr. Faustus*. Like his 1963 film *Judex*, *Shadowman* is a silent tribute to the masked villain serials originated on the silent screen by Louis Feuillade, and features a contemporary Paris boasting such marvels as a subterranean cult of Templar Knights, reanimated corpses, and an ingenious, wealthy criminal whose mastery of disguise has made him known as The Man Without a Face. Gayle Hunnicutt steals the show in a lengthy, silent sequence where she catwalks across the sleeping roofs of Paris wearing a jet-black mask and leotard. Formerly a Cult Video release.

The Sword and the Dragon (United): Aleksandr Ptouchko's epic telling of the Russian fable *Ilya Mourometz* is the story of a giant warrior with a heart of gold, whose naivete and muscle prevail in several tests of courage. These pit him against invading Mongol hordes, a wind demon, his own fellow countrymen and, finally, a fire-breathing three-headed dragon. Ptouchko, best know here for his *Sadko* (a.k.a. *The Magic Voyage of Sinbad*), remains Russia's finest fantasy filmmaker, not only directing his films but also designing and executing their FX sequences. Ptouchko would've laughed at the American ad copy (reproduced on the tape box) boasting of a "Cast of 106,000—11,000 Horses!" Actually, he filmed the sprawling battle scenes through a faceted crystal. By filming through one exposed facet of the crystal at a time, Ptouchko rendered a classic trick shot, a multiple exposure that multiplied a handful of extras into an awesomely packed battlefield! Alas, the dragon effect is not so successful. Printwise, this is a vast improvement over the red, scratchy and subtitled-for-the-deaf bootleg that was offered via mail order a year or so ago.

> ***City of the Evil Dead*** **betrays its U.K. origins by snipping out the climax of the head-drill scene.**

The Virgin of Nuremberg (Twin Towers): A companion release to *The Invaders* (see above), this is actually Antonio Margheriti's *Horror Castle*, one of his most enjoyable films. A newlywed bride joins

You won't see this Kevin Yagher varmint in *The Hidden*, but you can spot an embarrassing air mattress blooper.

"Are you joking?" gasps an *Eye of the Evil Dead* victim. "They've renamed our movie *Manhattan Baby*?!"

Photo: Courtesy Kevin Yagher

her husband in his family's castle in Germany, where a hooded torturer known as The Punisher held reign in medieval times. Naturally, he reappears to welcome her home. Filmed in the same castle as Mario Bava's *What!* (a classic of erotic horror), this is terror in a similar but more emphatic vein. A quarter-century later, the rat cage sequence still ranks with the most extreme scenes of horror ever dared on the screen. In-joke aficionados will like to know that the head surgeon in the B&W flashback is none other than Margheriti himself! Intact, beautifully reproduced and featuring a sleazy Riz Ortolani score you won't get out of your head for weeks.

PLEASE BABY PLEASE BABY BABY BABY PLEASE:

I'd like to salute Key Video for being an unusually exemplary and conscientious outfit. Not only do they release deserving, offbeat films like *Inferno* and *Phantom of the Paradise*, they take care to release such '50s blockbusters as *The Fly* (1958 version) and *The Girl Can't Help It* with their original, long-"lost" stereo soundtracks. Most recently, Key released four Alfred Hitchcock/David Selznick collaborations—*Rebecca*, *Lifeboat*, *Spellbound*, *The Paradine Case*. Because these are black-and-white films, Key has preserved their monochromatic purity by also presenting their logo and accompanying trailers (for color films) in B&W! *Spellbound* features one of Hitchcock's most effective, least-known masterstrokes: At a climactic moment, a gun is pointed at the camera and, as the trigger is pulled, there is a burst of red lasting two frames, one-twelfth of a second. Yes, Key Video knew the color was there and has reproduced it beautifully! (No, this isn't a brown-nosing tactic to get them to release *Suspiria* this Halloween, but . . .)

The shock of being bootlegged proves too much for this *Gates of Hell* lass.

GOOD NEWS & BAD NEWS:

About Warner Home Video's *Innerspace*—the good news is that this is the first major video release distributed in the "letterbox" format (widescreen), as well as with digitally processed sound. The bad news: Why, with a price tag of $81.95, did the company have to include Pepsi commercial?

Beware! CHUCK RUSSELL Brings Back THE BLOB

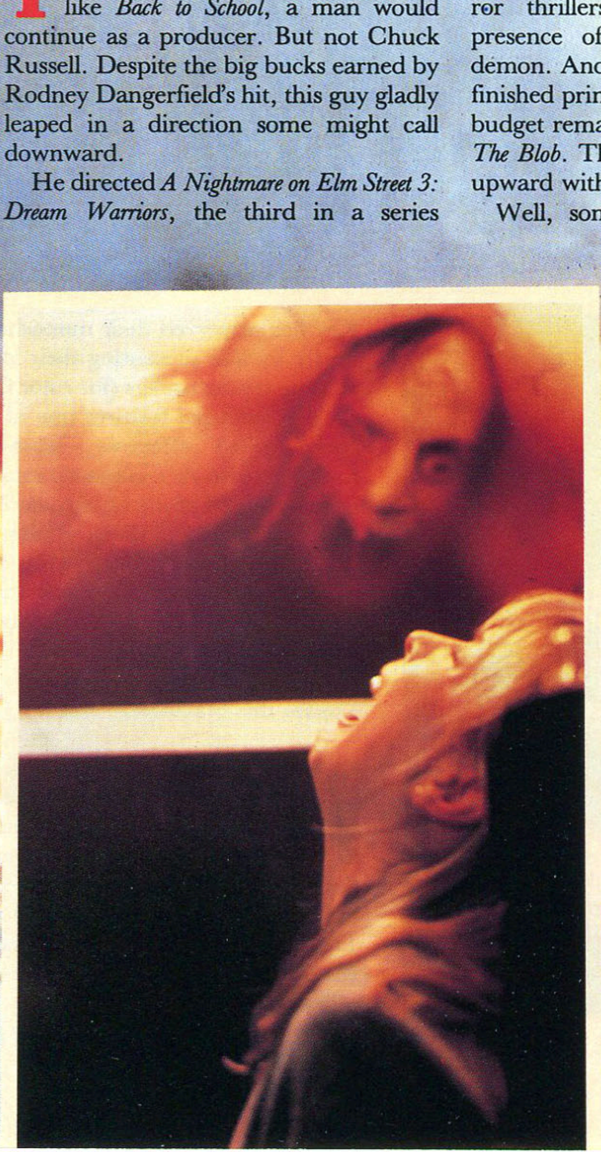
By BILL WARREN

"It just makes monstery sense. It's a fear of the worst death—being eaten."

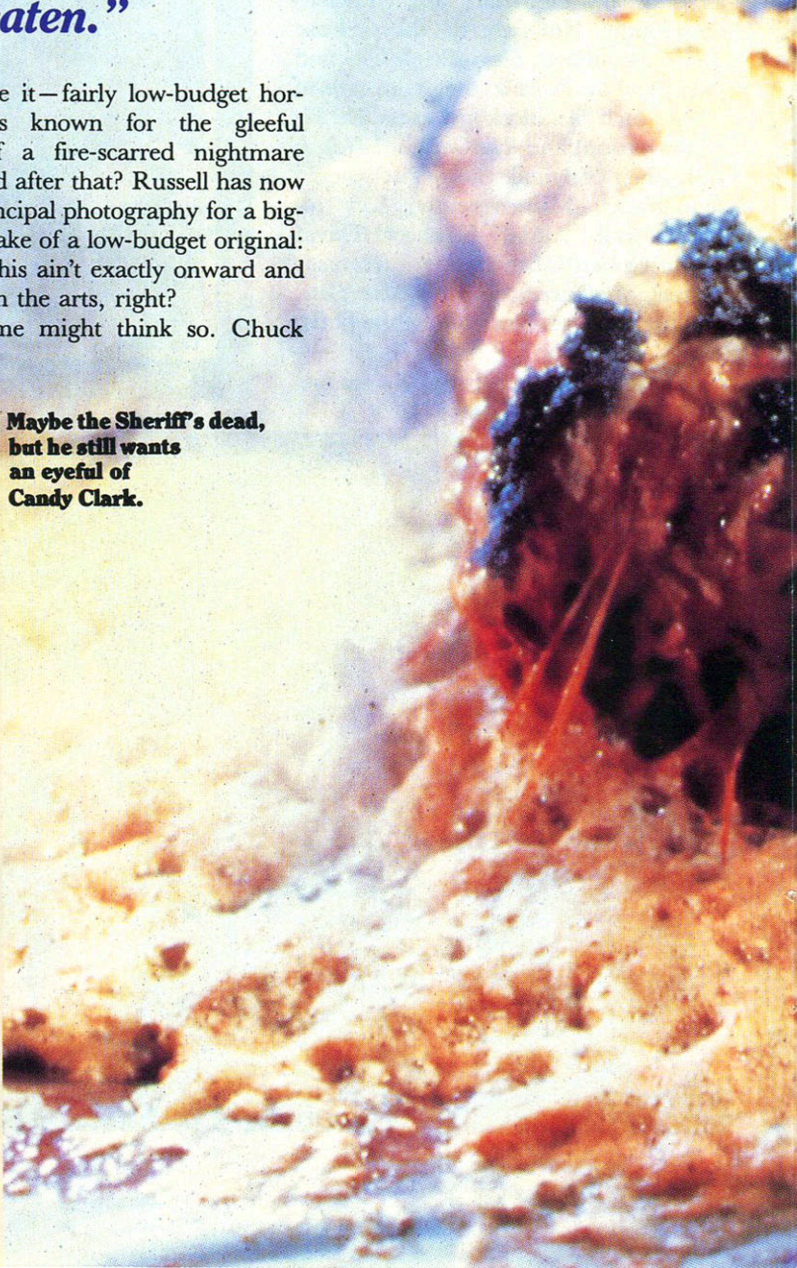
You'd think that after producing a hit like *Back to School*, a man would continue as a producer. But not Chuck Russell. Despite the big bucks earned by Rodney Dangerfield's hit, this guy gladly leaped in a direction some might call downward.

He directed *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors*, the third in a series of—let's face it—fairly low-budget horror thrillers known for the gleeful presence of a fire-scarred nightmare demon. And after that? Russell has now finished principal photography for a big-budget remake of a low-budget original: *The Blob*. This ain't exactly onward and upward with the arts, right?

Well, some might think so. Chuck



Maybe the Sheriff's dead, but he still wants an eyeful of Candy Clark.



Russell has his own goals. "I have to admit," he says without a smile, "I love scaring people."

He's taken time out from the punishing, long-day schedule of *The Blob* to chat on a windy Sunday afternoon. He's tired, he's tense, and there are still several weeks to go. Before and after his talk, Russell has to closet himself with the producer and discuss problems, delays and scenes yet to be shot. For the moment, he relaxes a little. His conversation meanders from topic to topic, rarely getting very specific about much of anything. He's forthcoming, but he doesn't have to worry about precise answers or information. He can lean back and unwind. He puts others personally at ease, and makes them confident that this guy will deliver a *Blob* worth seeing.

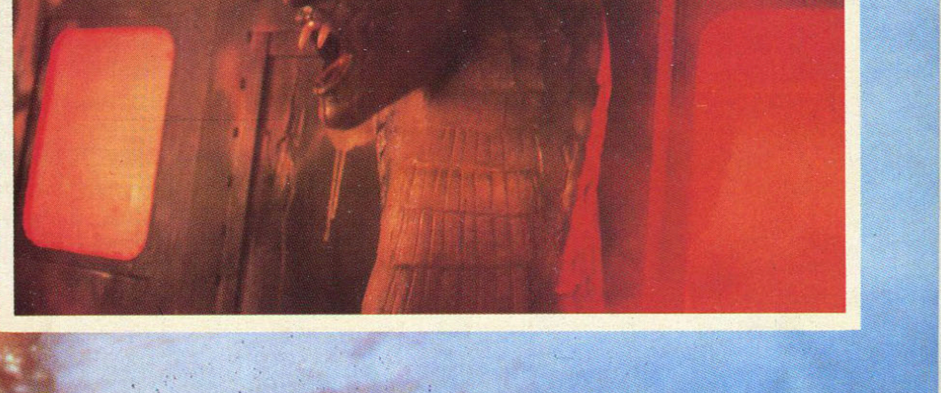
Russell has Celtic features, with thinning, curly hair that looks permanently windswept. He doesn't smile much, and not once during the interview does he crack anything like a joke. He's a serious, dedicated man, and what he's dedicated to right now is simple—"I'm trying to do a monster movie in the most classical sense."

Before he was hired for *Nightmare 3*, Russell had already begun toying with the idea of remaking *The Blob*. He approached Jack H. Harris, who'd produced the first film and still owned the rights; Harris had considered remaking the movie himself, but Russell persuaded him that *he* was the man for the job.

"I wouldn't remake something I thought was unremakable," he frowns. "I was vaguely insulted by the idea of remaking *King Kong*. No one would do a

Chuck Russell's *The Blob* should do for macaroni and cheese what *Jaws* did for swimming.

Chuck Russell counts Joseph Ruben's *Dreamscape* as the beginning of his career.



Photos: Marsha Blackburn/Palisades Ent. Corp.

Tony Gardner rigs up the makeup FX on a Blob victim.

Shawnee Smith finds a soldier in dire need of a hand.

giant gorilla movie today if there never had been one, but if there never had been a blob movie, today someone would decide to do something like that. The original *Blob* was a special film, and I got obsessed with doing my version of it, of updating it and using some of the expectations from the original. I think it shook people up so much because it's so primal."

This can hardly be argued. The Blob is alive, it moves and it eats and it grows. And as it grows, it needs to eat more. "It's a monster in its simplest form," Russell reasons. "There must be something about this thing that can slide under your door or squeeze through an air vent, or quietly dissolve somebody in the next room, that's very elemental. It just makes monstery sense. It's a fear of the worst death—being eaten."

And, Russell maintains, it's also all too convincing. "If something crashed and was deadly, it *would* be something more amoeboid. If you heard of a real alien landing, you wouldn't necessarily think of Darth Vader and his troops or Godzilla, so much as something disease-like, such as the Blob."

Russell was born in Danville, Illinois and spent most of his childhood in Chicago. "I was a genre fan growing up, but I was never obsessed with it. It was just always my favorite stuff. Comics, this kind of film; I tended even to know who was doing the special effects."

After changing majors several times at the University of Illinois, he graduated with a degree in film production, then came to Los Angeles in the mid-'70s. Anxious to do anything in film, he got a job sweeping out soundstages and soon thereafter he was hired as an assistant director on Paul Bartel's fast-paced satire *Death Race 2000*.

"On day one, I walked into the office—I'd gotten the job, a big break, as a second assistant director—and Paul Bartel and Roger Corman grabbed me and put the Frankenstein mask David Carradine wore in *Death Race 2000* over my head. 'Here, wear this.' And I immediately had a point-of-view camera experience. They're walking me around, room to room, while I could barely see and was frying in this latex mask. 'Oh, this is Chuck. He's the new AD. What do you think of this mask?' "

Working for Corman taught Russell a great deal though he doesn't consider himself a Corman protege. "I worked on three or four Roger Corman movies, but the guy hardly knows me. I always felt once removed from Roger himself, I never considered myself part of the family. I learned my stuff on Corman pictures, but I never got to direct one, I never edited one—I was always the guy running off to get the pickups."

Russell, a walking encyclopedia of movie jobs, slowly worked his way up, always busy, always thrilled to be in the business even though few of the individual results were of any real significance. His responsibility increased project by project, but on one film in particular, *The Seduction* (1982), he finally decided that he could write a better script. His first effort, *Necronomicon*, made the rounds of the studios, but so far has gone unproduced. He met Frank Darabont, a production assistant on *Hell Night* (1981), and later they began collaborating as writers. They co-wrote both *Nightmare 3* and *The Blob*.

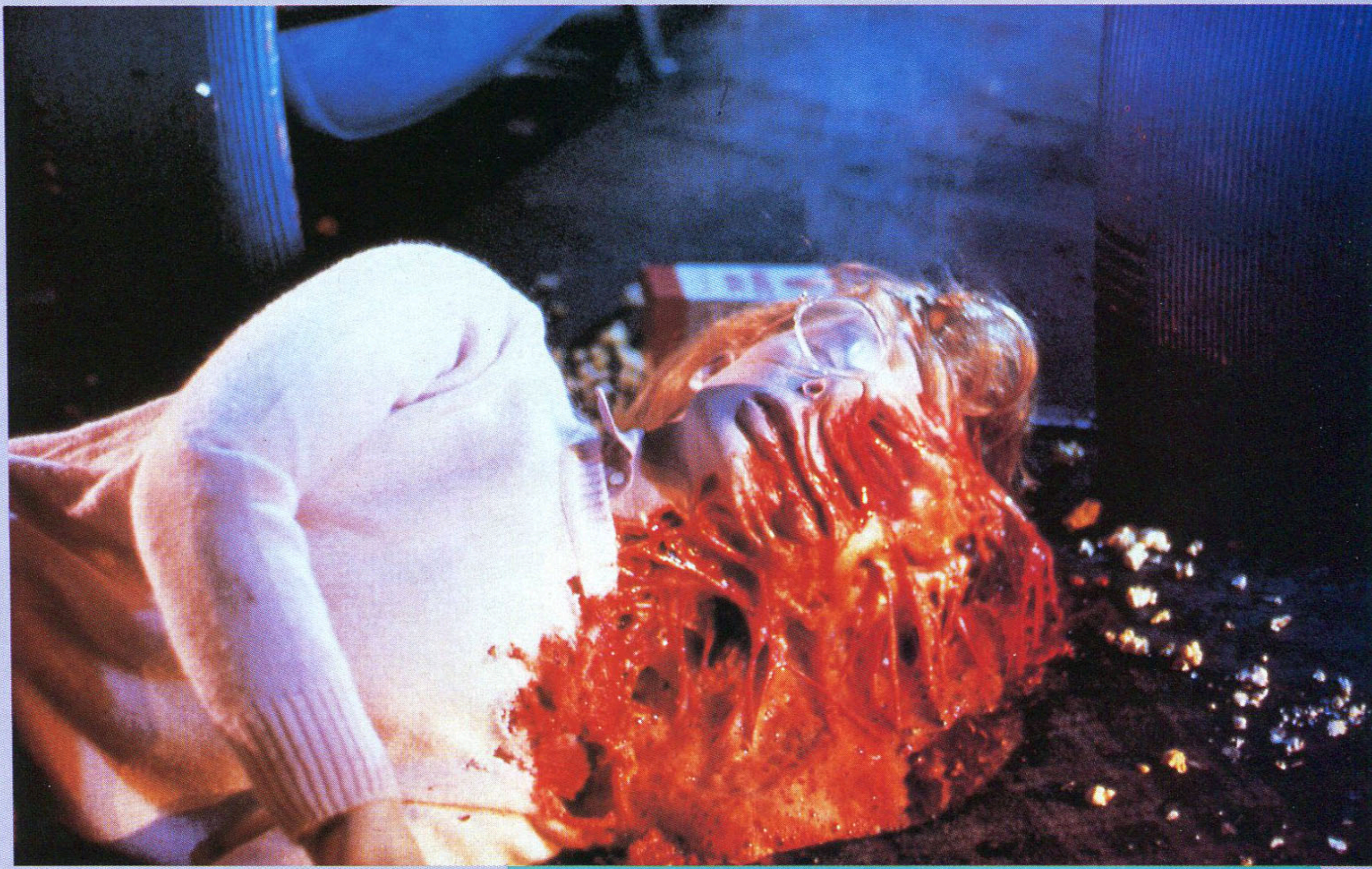
Not a boastful man by nature, Russell nevertheless feels proud of his work with Darabont. "We've written, believe it or not, six scripts together, including *Nightmare 3* and *The Blob*. It's really a very good relationship. When we write together, we have more fun than when we write individually. I like to think we learned together how to write, to be honest."

The first time genre fans started to notice Russell's name was on *Dreamscape*. Credited as one of the writers, it's hard to pin down how much he did, since he's typically generous in his praise of others.

"David Loughery came up with this brilliant concept, and I consider it his. He and [director] Joe Ruben remain friends, and both are really terrific filmmakers. There's certainly much of my style in *Dreamscape*, but I liked David Loughery's original script because it reminded me of myself. That one was such a strong vision from Loughery initially, and then a collaborative effort including a great job by Joe. For me, I clock my personal career from *Dreamscape*; that's the first movie that I feel I had a strong influence on."

Russell didn't make the move into directing until he was ready. *Nighmare 3* was an ideal first film for him. "I'm fascinated with fear; it's one of the most powerful emotions. I don't like movies about guys with knives who cut people up. There's no magic in it. Maybe I *am* a thrill junkie, but I don't like gore. I'm quite frightened by films featuring guys with knives, but I like magic, I like fantasy, and I like creature movies, so you won't see me doing movies about mad killers."

Freddy fans agree that not only was



Russell updates the infamous theater sequence nicely. They should do this to people who talk during movies.

> "The original *Blob* was a special film, and I got obsessed with doing my version of it."

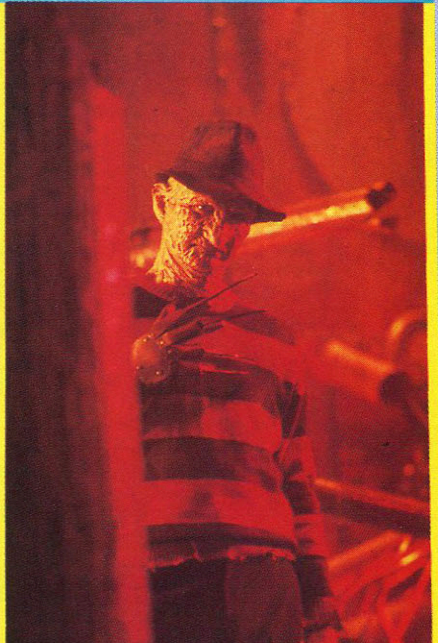
Dream Warriors at least up to the standards of the first *Elm Street*, in some ways it surpassed the original in imagination, as well as in presenting Freddy as a kind of clown prince of slaughter. "I had a blast," Russell smiles. "As I was doing that movie, I was thinking, 'I'm going to be ruined for future films, because what can be more fun than to creep up on the audience with this terrific device of dreams?' In the *Nightmare* movies, you don't know when you're in a dream or not—and it's not a cheat, it's the basic rule of the game. God, the things you can do with camera moves and reveals and special effects!"

Russell really *thinks* about the theory and practice of scares galore. "With all fantasy films, you've got to have a really strong handle on your fantasy construct," he believes. "In the case of *Elm Street*, 'Who's Freddy, what's he up to, what are his limitations?' If your fantasy construct is unlimited, then you lose tension. The audience feels *anything* might happen, so why should they be on the edge of their seats?"

Not only did *Nightmare 3* slaughter 'em at the box office, it slew a few critics as well, a bonus New Line didn't expect. Russell wasn't offered the next Freddy flick because New Line "pretty much knew I was into *The Blob* immediately after *Nightmare 3*. I did read their early drafts of *Nightmare on Elm Street 4* and gave them ideas."

Russell declares with color but some obscurity, "With my actors, I'm a cheerleader from hell. I really do think filmmaking is a collaborative process, a magical process. One day recently, I had the flu, but the machinery was still working. [*Blob* star] Kevin Dillon came in and blew me away in a performance on a morning where I had had a sleepless night. He absolutely *whaled* on his performance. I love actors."

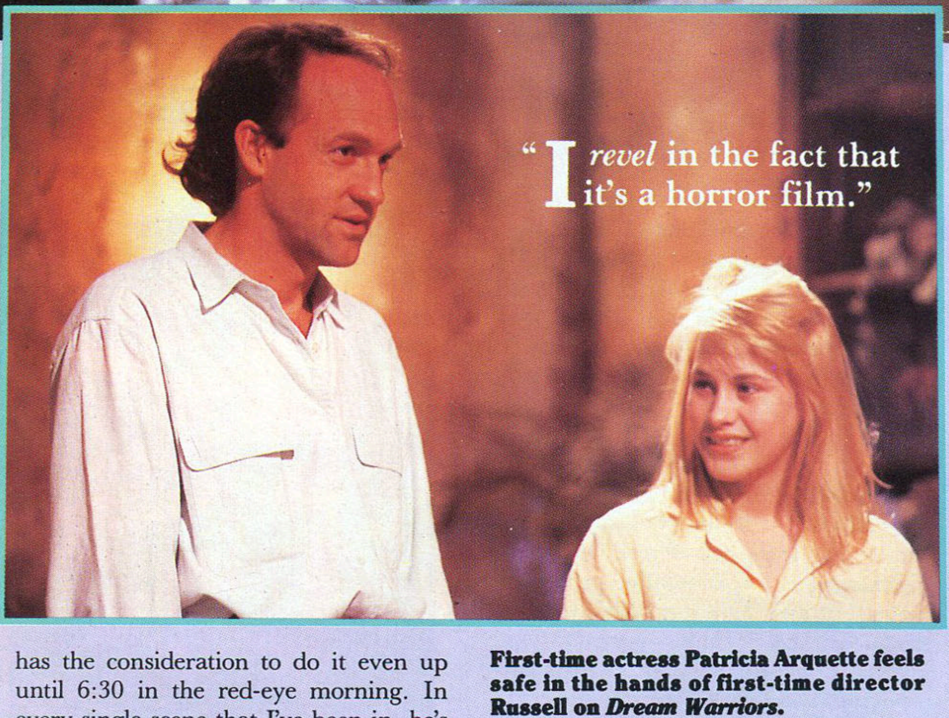
And the feeling, at least among some actors, seems to be mutual. "Chuck Russell is great," says Del Close, who plays Reverend Meek in *The Blob*. "Chuck manages to keep the set fun, and



Fred Photos: Robin D'Arcy/New Line Cinema

"Oh, Chuck doesn't like slasher movies, eh?" snickers an old friend. "We'll just have to see about that."

This new Blob doesn't kid around, huh?



"I *revel* in the fact that it's a horror film."

First-time actress Patricia Arquette feels safe in the hands of first-time director Russell on *Dream Warriors.*

has the consideration to do it even up until 6:30 in the red-eye morning. In every single scene that I've been in, he's saved me from some humiliating piece of actor's self-indulgent bullshit.

"He also knows when your ideas are better than his, as well as when his ideas are better than yours," adds Close, himself a noted director in one of the toughest of all acting disciplines, improvisational theater, not to mention a member of Chicago's Psychotronic Film Society. "I have absolute faith in him."

Soft-spoken Paul McCrane, *The Blob*'s straitlaced Deputy Briggs, is less colorful in his praise of Russell, but no less sincere when he offers the same reasons for his trust of the director. "Chuck directs with a good deal of humor," McCrane nods, concurring with Close. "And he'll talk things over with you. If he doesn't like something, he'll let you know. I basically do what makes sense to me, and if our ideas are not jibing, he tells me and we work on it."

Russell is an attentive man and used to being in charge. He holds strongly-felt ideas, though he sometimes talks in terms so broad it sounds like he's writing a book on the subject of horror movies and thrillers. He loves to make movies, but approaches them theoretically, more like the stereotype of a European director than American directors, who tend to talk about specifics with glee and focus. Russell's intensity is a diffuse one. He believes in heroism, in positive attitudes. You won't find a defeatist ending in a Chuck Russell script.

"The great fun of the horror genre," he opines "is that attitude of 'Let's go face our worst fear and see what that is.' We have it in us. Through love or courage, or a combination of those, you could face the worst thing, the worst evil. I'm more moved by films about the human spirit

(continued on page 63)

the stuff
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are made of. . . .

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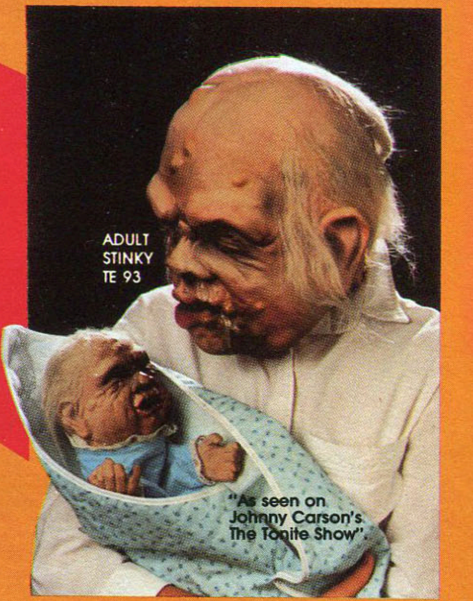
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*SYNGENOR ©Scared To Death, Bill Malone Productions

REVIEW

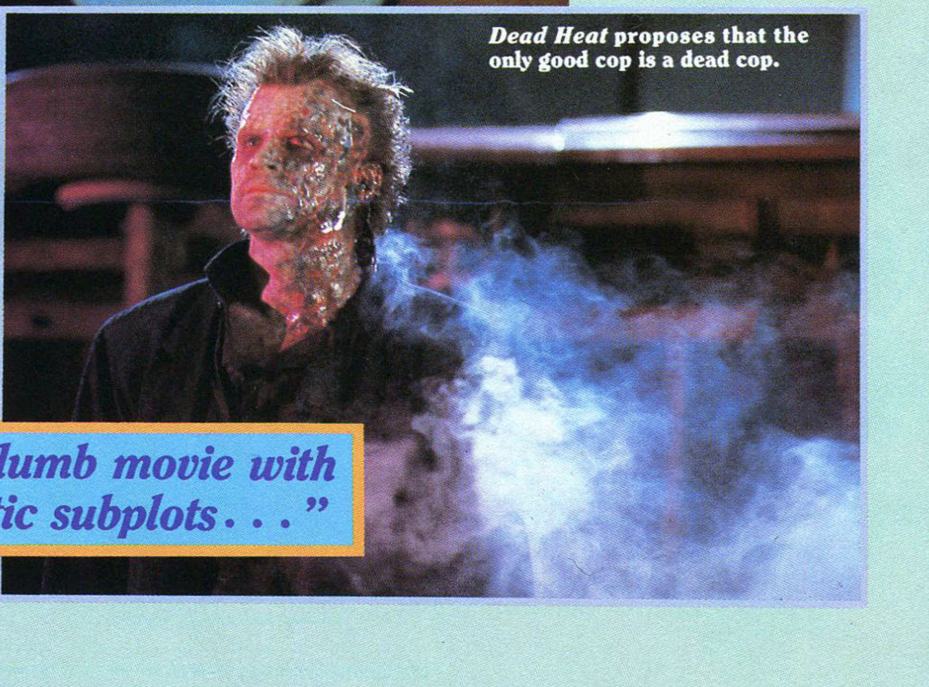
FX Pro Steve Johnson came up with a neat new look for the living dead.

DEAD HEAT

By MICHAEL WELDON

Two of my favorite movies during the last year were *RoboCop* and *The Hidden*, both of which did a great job mixing science fiction/horror into cops, action and comedy with very knowing '80s attitudes.

Dead Heat, New World's horror/cop comedy, isn't really scary or funny. The half-assed plot concerns a conspiracy to keep old rich people alive and a hero cop who becomes a slowly disintegrating but still dedicated zombie officer of the law, out to avenge his own death. Things start out promisingly enough in an exciting shootout between two zombie jewel thieves with machine guns and lots of LA's finest. A few scenes almost make *Dead Heat* worthwhile for horror fans: A pretty incredible mutant



***Dead Heat* proposes that the only good cop is a dead cop.**

> *"...an unsuccessful, dumb movie with hard-to-believe romantic subplots..."*

zombie biker (Steven Bannister, Fango #73's coverboy) attacks the heroes, and all the meat in a Chinese butcher shop comes to life, including a huge headless skinned hog and various parts of Peking ducks. The FX by Steve (*Fright Night*) Johnson are good, except for a decomposing woman (Lindsay Frost) that begins impressively and ends up seeming rushed and sloppy.

I always like watching Darren (*Kolchak*) McGavin, who plays the corrupt coroner, because he seems to enjoy acting so much. Keye Luke was Charlie Chan's Number One Son in the '30s, the original Kato in '40s *Green Hornet* serials and Master Po on the *Kung Fu* series. This time, the 84-year-old actor is reduced to a brief cliche role as an Asian villain. Vincent Price is similarly wasted in a weak role. (It's too bad he has become better known for TV commercials, Michael Jackson's "Thriller" and *Mystery!* hosting while accepting guest parts in mediocre movies. Somebody should hurry up and write a good starring vehicle for our last surviving major Hollywood horror star.)

The cop partners are played by Treat Williams and Joe Piscopo, and they share no chemistry. Williams starred in a good serious cop movie once (*Prince of the City*), but recently has been working mostly in Italy. Here he's Roger Mortis, dead cop. Piscopo is known for imitating Frank Sinatra and pushing Lite Beer on TV. In this co-star role, the former *SNL* star comes off as a muscle-bound, bug-eyed half-wit throwing out lame one-liners and saying things like "Gross!" Piscopo fares worse here than he did in his two earlier failed comedies, *Johnny Dangerously* and Brian De Palma's *Wise Guys*.

The Times Square audience with whom I saw *Dead Heat* spent much of the time groaning and even booing. First-time director Mark Goldblatt, a former editor for Joe Dante, and first-time screenwriter Terry Black have managed to deliver an unsuccessful, dumb movie with hard-to-believe romantic subplots and plugs for magazines published by Bob Guccione. If *Dead Heat*'s stars aren't careful, they'll end up working for Fred Olen Ray or Jesus Franco. And if we're lucky, this will be the last Joe Piscopo movie.

Joe Piscopo finds himself Saturday Night Dead.

Dead Photos: Marsha Blackburn/New World

See what happens when you wait too long between showers?

Photo: Steve Johnson EFX

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PROFILE

Julie Carmen—
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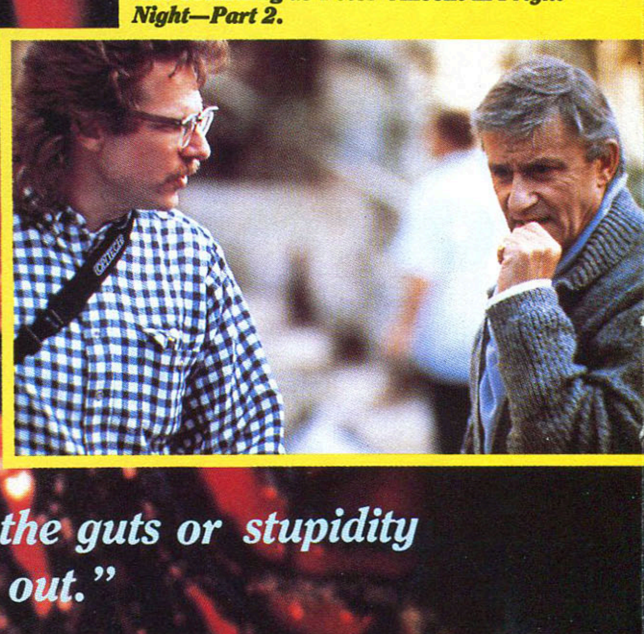
TOMMY LEE WALLACE Leaves the Carpenter Nest

By MARC SHAPIRO

Tommy Lee Wallace talks Roddy McDowall into returning as Peter Vincent in *Fright Night—Part 2*.



"All it takes is somebody with the guts or stupidity to stick his neck out."

Tommy Lee Wallace's approach to directing would give Roger Corman nightmares. The master of the one-take and the three-day shooting schedule would be particularly upset with the Kentucky-born director/writer's concern over a seemingly insignificant scene on the *Fright Night—Part 2* set.

Shower steam curling around a bathroom door. We're talking maybe 10 seconds of this footage, tops, in the finished product. Yet Wallace, looking Joe College in glasses and shoulder-length hair, has been stalking this shot for nearly an hour, moving in and out in tandem with his cameraman, whispering instructions, juggling suggestions and camera angles. There's concern in his eyes, a concern that says he's determined to turn this minor bit of business into something approaching art.

"You have to stay with a scene until you know you've got it," explains Wallace with just the slightest hint of a bluegrass accent. "My job is to pay a lot of attention to detail. When people are spending all kinds of money to preplan these sequences, I have to make this stuff hold up when it's on the screen."

John Carpenter knows that Wallace is not blowing smoke with this kind of statement. He grew up with Wallace in the wilds of Bowling Green; the two rocked out in a band during their school days. And, most important, he's played an integral part in Wallace's film career.

"Tommy's an extremely gentle guy who is in love with the lyrical side of storytelling," assesses Carpenter. "I truly believe he'd die to do a film version of *Huckleberry Finn* just so he could deal with the softer, subtle sides of that story."

Wallace is a new breed of genre cat. His horror portfolio is erratic, dotted with just as many misses as hits. He scripted the abused *Amityville II: The Possession*, then directed and wrote *Halloween III: Season of the Witch*, a ball that he feels was fumbled by Universal. He has directed television episodes of the revived *Twilight Zone* and *Max Headroom* and did much behind-the-scenes work on the original *Halloween* and *The Fog*. Add his current stint as director/co-writer on *Fright Night—Part 2*, and it's easy to see why Wallace, in his own low-profile way, is being touted as the great white horror hope.

"I don't think I'm bringing any special talents to horror films," admits Wallace. "All it takes is somebody with the guts or stupidity to stick his neck out. If anything makes me unique, it's that I'm not an expert in this field. I'm not a scholar, I haven't seen every movie ever made. I'm a naive person from the outer edge of filmmaking."

Bart J. Mixon and his Make-up FX Unlimited crew supplied the sequel with this "Super" Regine monster and the other FX seen on these pages.

Wallace's rather unconventional image of himself does not seem to have caused any great concern among the cast and crew of *Fright Night—Part 2*. You get no complaints regarding Wallace. No overblown praise, but no complaints.

"He's real prepared," offers visual FX honcho Gene Warren Jr. "Tommy gets right down to business and gets things done."

"Tommy's a good director to work with," judges actor William Ragsdale. "He'll sit down and discuss things with you. He gives you room to play with your part, but the final decision on how something plays is his."

I certainly did not lay in my room and dream about becoming a director," recalls Wallace of his childhood. "I was not a big film fan. I was into rock 'n' roll and *Batman* and *Donald Duck* comic books. I went to the movies the same way most people go to the movies, not with the idea of filmmaking as my career."

Wallace did latch onto art and, after bundling off Carpenter (who lived and breathed celluloid) to USC film school, went on to major in art and design at the University of Western Kentucky and Ohio University. It was at the latter school that the film bug bit.

"*Halloween II* was simply an exercise that would not let me show my stuff as a director . . . so I said no."

Wallace turned down *Halloween II*, but changed his tune when the Shapeless *Halloween III* came around.

"I had a teacher who was very high on film and the way of making designs move through animation," explains Wallace. "She encouraged me to take some film classes, the real introductory courses where you got credit for sitting in a dark theater and watching *Citizen Kane*. Because of those courses, I began to appreciate filmmakers like Orson Welles and Howard Hawks. Film began to seep into my life in a big way. I started to catch up."

Wallace began thinking seriously about what he would do after college. His initial inclination was to take his design sheepskin to New York and become a commercial art kingpin a la Milton Glaser, but a trip to Los Angeles to visit John Carpenter altered those plans. "I looked around the USC campus and discovered they had a real good animation program. I showed them my portfolio and was accepted."

Wallace began his latest round of education in 1971, taking grad school animation courses and some film classes on the side. "But I found that I was get-

Fright Photos: Tony Freidkin/Copyright '88 Vista

Shock of shocks, someone drilled the wrong-size holes in Brian (*Werewolf*) Thompson's bowling ball.

After all these years, scientists still can't come up with a good Holy Water repellent.

ting real bored with the nuts and bolts side of animation," he frowns, "while at the same time I was getting totally turned on by the possibilities of filmmaking. Through working with John, I discovered I just might have the knack for it."

"I always felt he would get into the animation and design side of filmmaking," Carpenter remembers. "That seemed like where his talents lay, until he came to USC and caught the bug."

Wallace began to sharpen his skills by working behind the scenes on *Dark Star* (then a student film, later an underground feature) with Carpenter and Dan (*ALIEN*) O'Bannon. Wallace's appetite was further whetted when he made an award-winning student film, *Starman in November*, and served as art director on Carpenter's low-budget urban thriller *Assault on Precinct 13*.

"I quit USC at that point, because I was starting to get work," Wallace interjects. "Granted, it was $2.50 an hour, editing commercials about Super Glue, but it was a start."

Wallace "knocked around," keeping body and soul together by art directing and editing commercials and similar duties on two more Carpenter projects, *Halloween* and *The Fog*. After *The Fog*, he decided that working two jobs at once was too hectic and stepped back to catch his breath.

Which was just as well, because Wallace's fledgling writing efforts, which began with such screenplays as *Test Pattern* and *El Diablo*, were beginning to pay dividends. He was hired for rewrites and also had the occasional original script optioned. There was just enough noise to interest Dino De Laurentiis in "taking lunch" with Wallace on the subject of an *Amityville Horror* follow-up.

"They already had a script for the sequel, but it was pretty awful," describes Wallace. "What had appealed to me about the original story was that it was all supposedly true and that the house had a long and interesting history to it. I felt any sequel would be more effective as a prequel, and that rang some bells with Dino."

Unfortunately, similar chimes didn't ring with the filmmakers of *Amityville II: The Possession*, who turned Wallace's screenplay into a loser and a half. "The whole intent of my story was obscured," mourns Wallace. "What I saw as window dressing, the filmmakers took very seriously. The result was that their efforts got totally in the way. I discovered that a writer can go through a painful process watching his work translated by another director."

By the time *Amityville II* died its deserved death, Wallace felt primed and ready to tackle his first directing job. And so it came as a shock when he was offered the opportunity to direct *Halloween II* and turned it down. "I understood," shrugs Carpenter, who co-produced and scripted *Halloween II*. "He just didn't feel good about it."

"People were definitely looking at me kind of funny when I said no," Wallace states. "But I had my reasons. I felt *Halloween II* was simply an exercise that would not let me show my stuff as a director. I didn't care for the idea of starting the sequel right after the first film ended. It seemed like just another exploitive body count picture, and I didn't want to end up imitating John's work. So I said no, held my breath and wondered if I'd ever get another chance."

Wallace got his chance in 1982 when producer Debra Hill approached him to direct *Halloween III: Season of the Witch*. He liked the idea.

"It was a completely different film," he notes. "A new story, new characters and no Michael Meyers. I would be able to write the script and put my own personal stamp on the film, so I jumped at the chance."

Wallace remembers his directorial debut as a dream job. "I knew most of the crew because we had worked together on John's other films. It was very much a family situation and, because I had come up through the ranks, they were very supportive. I learned a great deal on that film: the art of compromise, rolling with the punches and performing under pressure."

Unfortunately, Wallace's maiden voyage as director fell prey to a poor marketing campaign and, despite some solid reviews, made little impact before going to video heaven. But the experience broke the ice in terms of getting Wallace in the directing door and giving

When Regine (Julie Carmen) gets pissed, she fails to show her good side.

him a better grip on his prowess as a horror filmmaker.

"I feel like I've got a handle on what goes into creating good suspense, horror and scares," evaluates Wallace. "I don't ever want to be stereotyped as just a horror filmmaker, but I do feel I know how to make the genre work."

So does Carpenter, who almost feels guilty about the care and feeding of Wallace. "I feel, at this point, Tommy's a little bit trapped in horror because of working so much with me," Carpenter says. "I'm certain he would love to have the opportunity to do other things."

Wallace's eagerness to avoid the genre tag was aided and abetted during a recent round of television and motion picture assignments. His directing duty on three *Twilight Zone* episodes ("Little Boy Lost," "Dreams for Sale" and "Leprechaun Artist") were quirky and sensitive, rather than scary, stories. Additionally, Wallace directed two episodes of the dear departed *Max Headroom* series, which he claims "really gave me a chance to work out." Venturing even further afield, he recently skippered the coming-of-age film *Aloha Summer*.

Wallace jumped back into the horror pool this year with directing and co-scripting chores on *Fright Night—Part 2*. Wallace feels this second outing for Charley Brewster and Peter Vincent will most certainly stand on its own as well as providing a suitable companion piece for the original *Fright Night*. But he balks at getting too specific about the project.

"Everybody has called *Fright Night* real stylish and an '80s movie, but I don't really know from 'stylish'," he muses. "I don't think that at this career point I really understand all the nuances that go into filmmaking, and so I'd be pretty stupid to talk about things that I don't understand."

But what Tommy Lee Wallace does seem to understand is a firm approach to writing and directing. "My attitude is that every element of filmmaking is there to serve the story," he affirms. "Story comes first, performance second, and all the other aspects of filmmaking come third."

Carpenter, in making a final case for Wallace's emerging talents, cuts to the heart of the matter: "In filmmaking, it's all a matter of choices. And, so far, Tommy appears to have made all the right ones." ✸

"I've got a handle on what goes into creating good suspense, horror and scares."

It's manicure time for werewolf Louis (Jonathan Gries).

PIECE O' MIND

by Chas. Balun

Good Golly, Grand Guignol!

"Yum-yum, eat 'em up!" giggles an eager extraterrestrial in *Alien Contamination.*

Decapitational acetylene award recipient *Street Trash* features the work of Scott Coulter.

Let's face it, Bunky, you've been good. Real good. Kept all your New Year's resolutions. Asked for *and* got that much-needed raise. Bravo, lad! Replaced that worn left rear tire, had the others checked for treadwear and then rotated. You've even seen the dentist for the first time in six years, and the news wasn't all *that* bad. You can handle it.

Congrats are in order, you ambitious devil, for nobly re-reading *Moby Dick*. All you remembered about it from high school was "Call me Ishmael" and the fact it had something to do with fishing, handicapped megalomaniacs, albino cetaceans and the Meaning of Existence. Your attitude has improved nearly 100 percent, and you're to be sincerely commended. Why, gosh, you've even worked a little overtime on Saturday mornings and paid your utility bills on time for the last seven months.

But most astonishing of all, ol' Bunkeroo, is the fact that you've kept your pledge and refrained from renting any of those splashy new splatter videos with the killer covers and the trumped-up warnings on the box about "Explicit violence and gore. Not for the squeamish." Yeah, sure. You bet. You've been burned the last 26 times. You're still not convinced they've made a decent unrated horror film since *Re-Animator* or *Day of the Dead*, and that was three years ago. You won't get fooled again, right? Well, tonight you've hugged the wife, petted the dogs, emptied the trash, scanned the cable guide and are preparing to settle for something on HBO about an Australian beet farmer who survives the drought and takes a new wife . . . when suddenly, before your hand ever reaches the remote control, you feel something begin to cloud your mind. Insidious phantom fingers grasp your spinal cord and hot, sulphurous breath is upon your neck, whispering unspeakable things in your ear: "*Evisceration . . . dismemberment . . . slime . . . maggots in your mouth . . . exsanguination . . . glistening viscera nailed to a tree and left withering in the noonday sun . . . splintered bones . . . chewed up brains . . .*"

Slumber Party Massacre II. . . does showcase some righteously offensive FX work by the unjustly neglected James Cummins.

You blink you eyes, shake your head. The visions persist. Those naughty, moist things—shiny, quivering, wet, wild. Your mindscape bursts with beasts, blood, terror and pain. Horrowshow. Ultraviolence. To hell with that low-cal, dietetic cable video fluff—you want something meaty, something moist, marvelous. And lots of it, too. Anything worth doing is worth *overdoing*, right?

Hey, Bunk, relax. Folks have been feeling that way for a long, long time now. You're not some repressed, homicidal misanthropist, but yet another member of a select club of connoisseurs who come from a long, time-honored tradition in entertainment. Here, let me tear your ticket and show you to your seat. Welcome to the Theatre du Grand Guignol.

Yes, before Herschell Gordon Lewis, William Castle, George Romero, Sam Raimi or Lucio Fulci, there was Max Maurey in late 19th-century Paris. Max was an opportunistic entrepreneur, a genuine party animal who really knew how to paint the town red. His little theater in the Montmartre district specialized in short plays, drenched in blood, and featured the most gruesome, horrible mutilations the performers could think up. Though some presentations were based on the works of such Gothic goremeisters as Edgar Allan Poe, most plays were original and written with a specific emphasis on serious splatter. The audiences could not have cared less about character development, plot structure, dialogue or logic. They were there to get knocked dead by the red. So, you see, the French were way ahead of you, as early on they recognized the medicinal and therapeutic value of a night on the town that featured gleeful helpings of gratuitous gore.

Splatter theater flourished in France, made its way in diluted form across the

***Street Trash* brings new meaning to acid indigestion.**

A proud mom and her newborn demon brat steal the show in *Forever Evil.*

Trash Photos & Poster: FX by Scott Coulter

***Redneck Zombies* don't like guys who eat quiche.**

channel into England, and successfully continued its Reign of Pain for more than half a century before being rendered into redundancy by the new wave of "explicit" horror films of the early '60s and '70s.

Even now, after the dawn of Romero, Raimi and *Re-Animator*, the ball-busting R (restricted) rating insisted upon by most producers has threatened to take the "Grand" right away from the "Guignol." They want to make barf bags all but obsolete. So where do you go? Who do you turn to? How do you spell R-E-L-I-E-F?

Hey, that's why we're here! You not only get a history lesson, but a few hot tips on how to remedy the situation. "Pssst, hey kid, wanna see some *really* funky stuff?" You know, movies with little or no social redeeming value, the ones you can't possibly justify to friends or family, the ones that "look you straight in the eye . . . and spit." (A promise kept by the claimant, *African Addio*, a.k.a. *Africa: Blood and Guts*.)

Jim Muro's *Street Trash* (1987) restores your faith as it delivers the groceries by the truckful, easily meeting and surpassing the challenge issued on the film's poster: "Just when you thought you had seen it all." This one is as demented and perverse as they come. The mood is playful, the direction over-the-top but assured. Bodies have never been blowed up so good, and director Muro shows a real knack for naughtiness. The castration/keep-away sequence is inspired lunacy with a cutting edge. And who would've guessed an uncorked acetylene tank, used in this case as an unstoppable torso torpedo, would prove the most innovative splatter weapon of the year? Whew, this one's *all* meat . . . with a mission.

To hell with that low-cal cable video stuff—you want something meaty, something moist, marvelous.

Roger Evans' *Forever Evil* (1987) and Deborah Brock's *Slumber Party Massacre II* (1987) are far less classy but almost as meaty, and both feature pretty nifty, chunk-blowing FX work. In the former, an evil monster-god by the name of Yog Kathag (that's Goy Gahtak spelled backwards) is involved with some gruesome cult sacrifices in your typically secluded country cabin where your typical carload of victims-to-be await their fate. Besides your usual acts of interpersonal mayhem, overtly gratuitous prenatal and placental splatter seems to be the focus here. Not since Ruggero Deodato's infamous aboriginal abortion sequence in his sick, mean-spirited *Cannibal Holocaust* (1979) has maternity been treated with such wanton disregard. In *Forever Evil* (not to be confused with the Karen Black movie of the same name), demon babies make unscheduled departures from the womb not once but twice, in scenes guaranteed to make prospective mommies and daddies flip immediately to *Family Ties*. These two terminally tasteless sequences zip swiftly past an R rating and never look back.

Slumber Party Massacre II is a chintzy, knuckleheaded mess of a movie, but it does showcase some righteously offensive FX work by the unjustly neglected James (*Strange Invaders*) Cummins. Not only do we get lingering shots of chunks-o'-flesh flapping about the tip of a 5-foot power drill, but Cummins also treats us to the somewhat dubious honor of witnessing a teen bimbo's face turned into a huge pustule which, when ruptured, showers the camera with about three quarts of that chunky yellow slime you find on your mirror every so often. Now, isn't that special?

Moving away from the somewhat traditional techniques of triggering an audience's gag reflex are Chang Jen Chieh's Oriental Barf-O-Rama, *The Devil* (1981) and the overlooked U.S. entry in the Tons-O'-Bugs sweepstakes, Jeff (*Blue Sunshine*) Lieberman's *Squirm*

(1976). Your reporter dares anyone to eat a pasta-related dinner product while viewing either of these writhing, wormy time-wasters. *Squirm* may ultimately win the body count tally (press kits boasted of over 250,000 participants); in *The Devil*, it's not the numbers, it's where these pesky invertebrates end up that sets off your puke-o-meter. That's right, precious orifices filled to bursting with the most disgusting assortment of snakes, eels, centipedes, maggots and worms, all cheerfully disgorged on cue by an altogether zany, spirited cast of Asian barfmongers. One added note: Stay away from jello or pudding products, cream corn and egg yolk during the lesion-lancing scenes, OK?

To round out your international splatter platter, may we suggest entrees like Luigi Cozzi's fun 'n' gooey exploding torso thriller, *Alien Contamination* (1981), or even the dumb-as-dirt *1000 Cries Has the Night*, a.k.a. *The Chainsaw Devil*, a.k.a. *Pieces* (1981), a Puerto Rican/Spanish/American/Italian clunker that nonetheless delivers several bloody buzzsaw attacks in handsome, loving detail.

Now back stateside for two titles worth a second look for the hard-to-please gorehound in your family: *Night Train to Terror* (1985) and Romano Scavolini's twisted *Nightmare*, a.k.a. *Nightmares in a Damaged Brain* (1981). *Night Train* is an anthology of violent tales composed of two short films as well as a third episode cut down from a feature-length entry entitled *The Nightmare Never Ends*, a.k.a. *Cataclysm* (1981). All three episodes feature copious discharges of bodily fluids. *Nightmare* was distributed with a self-imposed X rating (which it certainly merited) and establishes its credentials right off with two well-executed ax murders. The other stabbings, whackings and shootings will please the proud *and* the prurient. This film also deserves note as the one in which Tom Savini had to take legal measures to prevent the producers from using his name on the posters; only the most opportunistic hucksters, trying to hawk the film, would claim that a one-time phone conversation could qualify for star billing.

Finally, here's a young, upcoming crop of frugal splatter auteurs whose backyard gorefests have made commendable and even inspired use of power mowers, claw hammers, rotor blades, screwdrivers, shotguns and chainsaws to get their point across. Tim Ritter's *Killing Spree* (1987), Pericles Lewnes' *Redneck Zombies* (1987) and even Nathan Schiff's mutant mondo Super-8ers like *Weasels Rip My Flesh* (1979), *Long Island Cannibal Massacre* (1980) and *They Don't Cut the Grass Anymore* (1985) show H.G. Lewis a thing or two about operating on a budget roughly equivalent to the blue book trade-in value of a 1963 Ford Falcon.

OK, that's a wrap. You'll be quizzed on this material next issue. *Bon Apetit*.

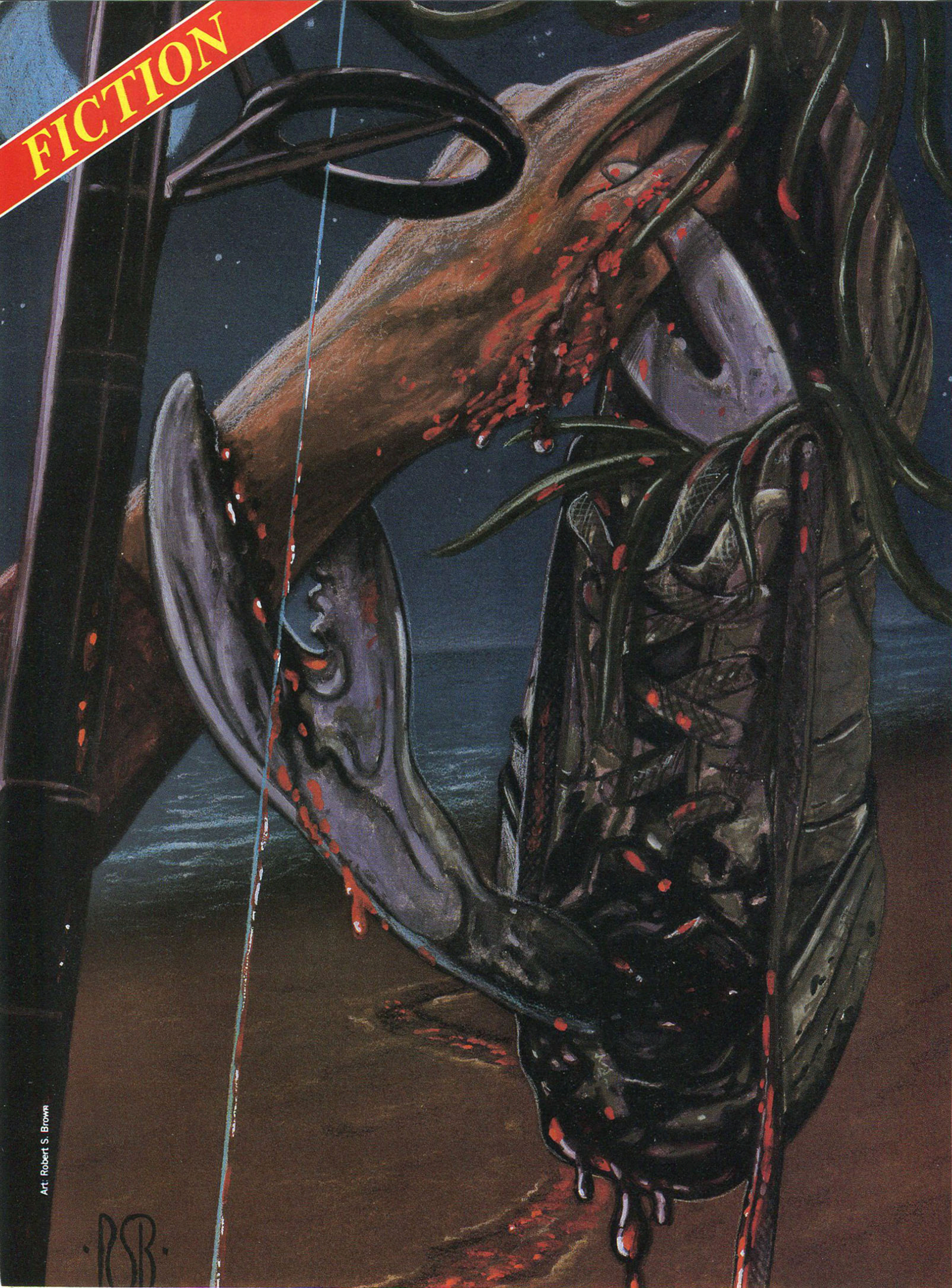
You know those zits you always get the day before a big date? See *Slumber Party Massacre II* and stop complaining.

Photo: James Cummins

Someone did this with a hammer in *Killing Spree*. And not a spot on the rug!

Photo: Twisted Illusions

FICTION



Art: Robert S. Brown

GHOST CRABS

By K.M. RAMSLAND

When Dana first spotted the tiny eyes peering at her from behind a mound of foot-imprinted sand, she thought they were cute. Club-shaped and dark, they seemed to take in her buxom form appreciatively, then disappeared.

"What was that?" Dana nudged her brunette companion.

Karen glanced after Dana's pointing finger, then grabbed the *Field Guide to Wildlife on Cape Hatteras*. Thumbing quickly through dog-eared pages, she wriggled her painted toes and pronounced, "Ghost Crab!"

Dana smirked in sarcastic disbelief. She reached for the book, but Karen held it away.

" '*Ocypode quadrata*—' " she continued.

Dana knocked her forehead in feigned idiocy. "I should've known."

"Just listen." Karen was delighted to have a distraction from the clownish antics of Bob, Steve and Mike, their three male companions, who fished from the beach nearby. She proceeded to read, " 'They're two inches long, by an inch and three-quarters wide, with an H-shaped depression in the front half of their shells.' "

She broke off, flinching out of casting range as Mike, a bearded tow-head, backed up to within three feet of her chain and prepared to fling out his line.

Dana glanced back to where the crab eyes had been, saw only an empty expanse of sand. Twisting a crimp of auburn hair between thumb and forefinger, she peered into thickening shadows fastened on the ankles of the setting sun.

"They're quick," said Karen. "That's why they're called Ghost Crabs. Now ya see 'em, now ya don't!"

Dana reached again and succeeded in grabbing the book from Karen's hands. She scanned the index, then opened to the appropriate page. " 'Two-inch eyestalks'—that's what I saw—and 'rectangular bodies, with white pincers and a white belly.' " She looked up, perplexed. "It says here that they face the moon when it's full." Dana frowned at the chill that swept down her back. "Sounds like some sort of werewolf. But what if the moon isn't full?"

Karen shrugged. "I suppose then they face anywhere they please, like at us."

With a squeamish shiver, remembering the scanning eyes, Dana searched for more information. " 'They dig around the sand for their food,' it says."

Karen giggled. "Maybe they're hunting for a couple of delicately-flavored chicks!" She gestured toward a swift, mottled-gray form, vanishing into the scurfy beach as fast as an uncommitted man after a sexual conquest. Dana, turning too slowly, caught only a small indentation where the crab had been. She shrugged, replaced one end of a sand-loosened Band-Aid on her blistered little toe, then sat back to watch the guys. She breathed in the ocean air. A gull squawked somewhere overhead.

Bob was closest to them, a premarital fishing companion of Mike's who had agreed to stay with the two couples in the rented beach house. Dana ran lethargic eyes over his beefy form. He held a tall pole bent slightly at the tip, where his fragile line caught the bare glimmer of departing sun. He seemed to have lost himself to the fisherman's thread as it faded toward the water.

Dana recalled how, last night, she and Bob had bashfully discovered a mutual delight at being scared. Their intertwined, vivid imaginations had yielded a torrent of hideous images from movies and novels. Dana smiled to herself. Was Bob, right this moment, mentally breathing life into a stinking, slimy sea-creature which crept forth only on the blurred edges of his vision? The setting was right: a twilit beach at the mouth of an incomprehensible, pounding darkness, populated by only . . .

Dana sat up. She liked a good scare, but it had to be contained. She had to be able to turn on the light, or put the book down.

Karen saw, close range, a curious black eye measuring her.

"I got a hit!" Bob yelled. He reeled back. "It's big! Gotta be a marlin!" He adopted a series of bouncy gyrations to prove the monster fish on the end of his line. Steve and Mike watched him, shaking their bearded heads. One does not hook a marlin fishing from the beach.

Mike chuckled and whispered theatrically behind his palm, "Fishing is Bob's way of hallucinatin' legally."

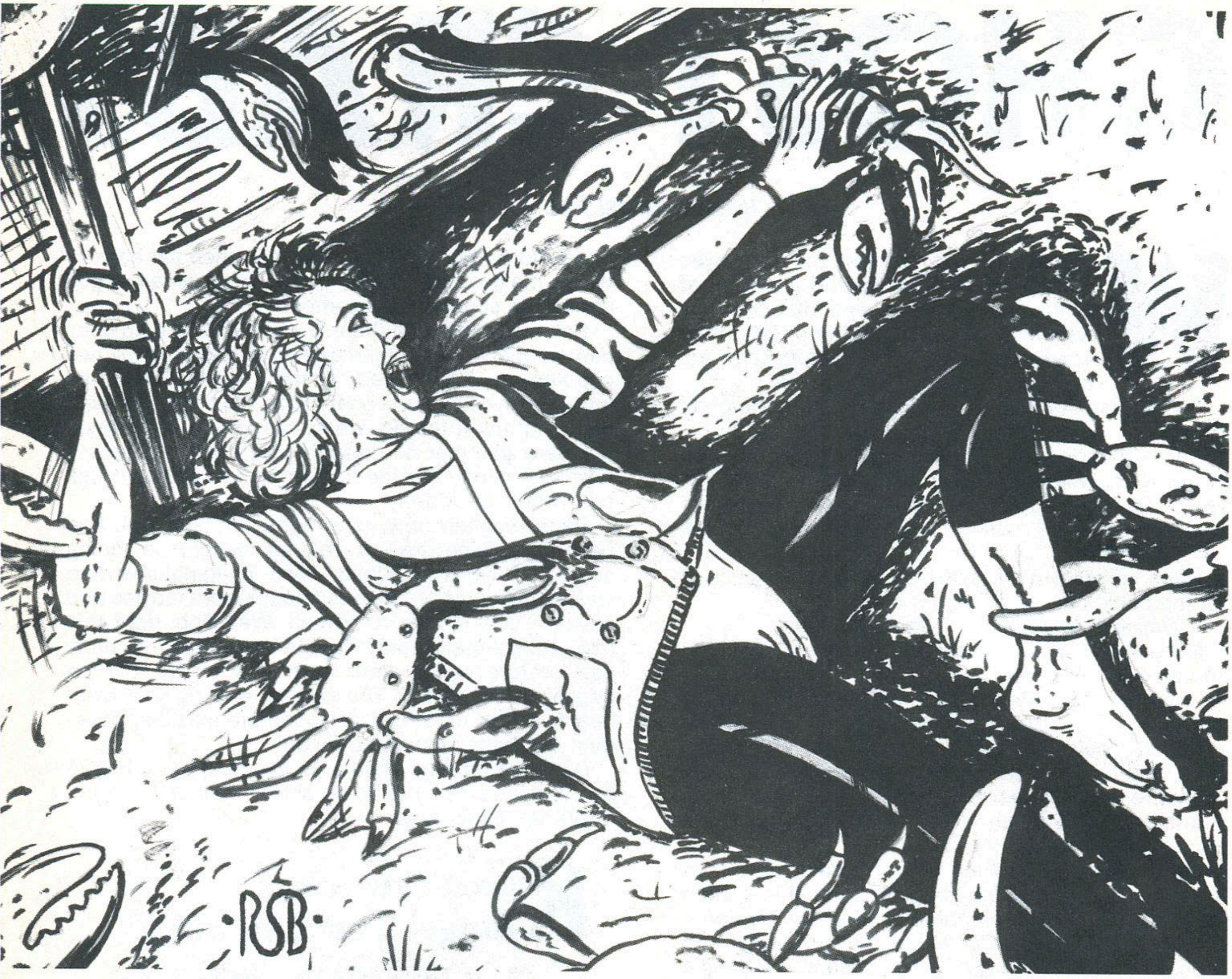
"Whadja get?" Karen asked. "Let's see!"

Bob reeled in a tangle of seaweed, clinging to a solitary, grayish tennis shoe with a hole at the big toe. He moaned and shook his head.

A crab skittered sideways, close to Dana's head. This time she saw it. She sat up quickly. Not wanting the others to notice her nervousness, she covered her startled motion by pulling on a blue cotton sweater. She hugged herself and glanced around. "It's probably better fishin' down the beach," said Mike.

"It always is," Dana giggled knowingly. She'd heard that line a dozen times during their fish-starved week on the beach. "Just leave us the lantern."

Bob picked up his tackle box and walked away to the left. Mike and Steve shadowed him.



Art: Robert S. Brown

Sitting back to enjoy her wine cooler, Dana put the binoculars to her eyes. There was little to see in the gathering shadows. Then something crossed her sights, held its ground. She sat up with a squeal of alarm. "Those eyes! They're looking at us again!" Her sweater was suddenly not warm enough. "They're really looking *right at us*!"

Karen pointed. "There's another one."

Dana followed her plum-painted nail but saw nothing. She swallowed away a mental vision of clamoring, spidery crabs closing around them.

Suddenly, two appeared as if from nowhere, the color of sand on the dusky beach, inches from Karen's toes. They lifted themselves onto spindly legs, hesitated, then skittered sideways across the gritty surface, their eyes still fastened on her. Just as quickly, they disappeared.

As if they'd never been there at all.

"How many are there?" Dana asked softly. She was scarcely audible.

"I don't know. I've seen at least five. There're probably lots more. They start coming out about this time, I think." Karen sounded so casual, so matter-of-fact.

Dana was silent. She averted her gaze, then asked, "What did that book say about them? What do they eat?"

Karen shrugged.

Dana grabbed the *Field Guide* and leaned into the lantern, skimming through the colored photos of fish, birds and crustacea, great varieties of creatures unnoticed by the casual beach-walker. She pinned a fingertip on the Ghost Crab page. "Let's see, let's see," she murmured, squinting to read in the fading light. "Here it is! They eat . . ." She glanced at Karen. "They eat things in the sand! *We're* in the sand!"

Karen laughed. "I think we're a little too large for them to carry off to their holes."

Dana looked strangely pale. "But their holes can go as much as 10 feet down. *Ten feet*! That's deeper than a grave."

"Oh, Dana, you are a kick! I don't know who's more weird, you or Bob!" She rose to her feet, brushing sand off her jeans. "I'm going back to the house for more wine coolers. Want some?"

Dana glanced up. She swallowed. Karen was leaving her. . . *alone*. "Sure, sure, red if there's any left."

She watched Karen's retreating figure. With each swishing step, Dana felt the night close in. Her lively spirits from the balmy beach evening with her friends began to dissipate, a drop of blue dye sprinkled into a swimming pool. She hugged herself against the sudden chill, resisted the unbidden resurrection of ghastly images—dormant by day—that she had conjured up with Bob in their spooky conversation the previous evening. In whispered awe, they had given shape to an invisible world made up of nameless things just waiting for isolated, vulnerable individuals. Creatures that had lived under Dana's bed, in her closet, in the dark basement of her childhood home, in their web-encrusted attic. And surely on a lonely stretch of beach, where the protecting light swiftly faded into a perfect habitat for soul-sucking things, there were no doubt slimy, horrid organisms with clicking, grasping, saw-toothed claws which could drag her into the ocean. Or down . . . *into the sand.*

Dana shivered and pulled a beach towel around her shoulders. She looked for the guys. They were out of sight, down the beach. She contemplated running after Karen, then felt foolish for it. She was an adult. She was not about to let anyone see how really frightened she was at that moment, not even if it meant facing, alone, *whatever was out there.*

> It popped into view between her feet, its clammy shell slick with ocean mucus.

Glancing about warily, Dana spotted a quick movement from the corner of an eye. *As if they were watching for their chance, waiting until her head was positioned just right to avoid their alien gaze.*

Then she saw one. A big one. It popped into view between her feet, its clammy shell slick with ocean mucus. She squealed, drew back. The creature remained, refusing to return to the timeless sand the way she'd expected. It surveyed her instead, finger-long eyestalks telescoping her bare legs. Hair rose on the back of Dana's neck. She drew herself up, felt the cooling sand shift beneath her. The crab lifted itself on long jointed legs, maneuvered gawking eyes to take her in. Its white, jagged pincers clicked in a bullying rhythm.

Something slithered, across Dana's foot. She jerked, tossing it away. *A lizard,* she hoped. There had been many scampering about in her five days at the North Carolina beach. *Please, let it be just a lizard!* Her eyes remained trained on the sinister crab.

It feeds on things in the sand ran through Dana's head. To her right, three crabs lifted themselves out of their holes. They had been there all along, under the camouflaging grains. Dana felt like Gulliver in the Land of the Lilliputians, knew she was being absurd, saw the sentence in the *Field Guide*, then naked, vulnerable Gulliver.

When Karen returned, she was startled by the pair of empty, lantern-illuminated chairs. Irritated, she called Dana's name. She hated it when Dana did that, tried to scare her out of her wits. She didn't share Dana's silly need to be frightened. She'd never so much as touched a horror story.

"Dana, dammit!" she shouted. "Where'd you go?" There came no response, but an idea occurred to her. "Hey, Dana," she called out craftily, "there's a great-looking guy out here. Mmm! You don't wanta miss 'im. Bun alert!"

But Dana failed to show up. Even for that.

Karen shrugged, trailing her toe reflectively in the night-blurred sand. Dana had probably gone to see if the guys had caught anything. She'd be back for her wine cooler. Karen sat down to wait, noticed a used Band-Aid, recalled Dana's blister. She reached for it, but jerked away when she felt a sharp jab on her fingertip.

When she leaned her weight on her toes to see what had bitten her, a second pain shot through her big toe, as if she'd stepped on a thorn. She drew her foot back. Crab eyes ogled her, then disappeared.

"Ghost crab," she said, shaking her head. Protecting their holes, she supposed. She sat down and reached for her wine cooler.

Four crabs lifted themselves from their sandbeds, grabbed Karen's plum-dotted toes and jerked. She squealed. Two more crabs joined the effort. Karen gasped at the sudden, unexpected assault. She flung her bottle toward her unseen attackers.

"Mike!" she screamed.

He was too far away to hear.

Her left foot submerged into the shifting ground. Karen kicked with her right, then felt the pincers clamp around it, watched it disappear. Using her hands for leverage, she tried to pull away. Three crabs fastened onto her right wrist and yanked her off balance. She crashed to the ground, grabbing for her chair. She was sinking. *The crabs were taking her down.*

She kicked, felt her ankles held painfully fast by jagged teeth. Karen tried again to scream, but sand filled her mouth, her nose. She coughed, then breathed suffocating grit. She felt sand give way at her back, as if a dozen tiny creatures were scraping the grains out from under her. It was happening so fast she had time only to realize that she wasn't coming back up for air. Sand filled her ears, eyes, throat. She gasped one deep breath for final effort to rouse someone's attention, regretting it when harsh crystals sprayed into her lungs like buckshot. *Ten feet down*, that's what Dana had said. *Deeper than a grave.*

A sharp claw pried at her eyelids. Karen saw, close range, a curious black eye measuring her. Sand blurred, then blocked the horrifying reality.

When the men returned from their futile expedition, Bob frowned at the two abandoned chairs. It reminded him of a scene from a horror movie which had capped a particularly brutal abduction. A blanket of lingering violence had settled onto an empty park

(continued on page 65)

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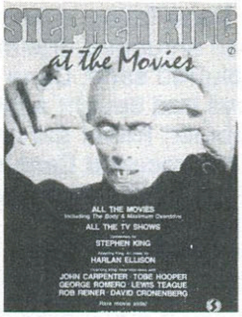
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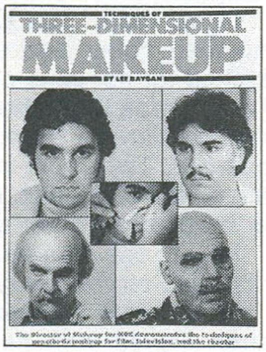
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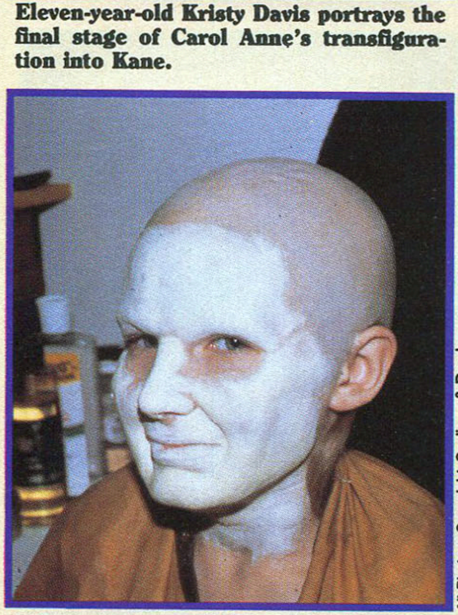
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When all the appliances are in place, Kristy is literally awash with foam latex appliances. Can you believe she loved every minute of this?

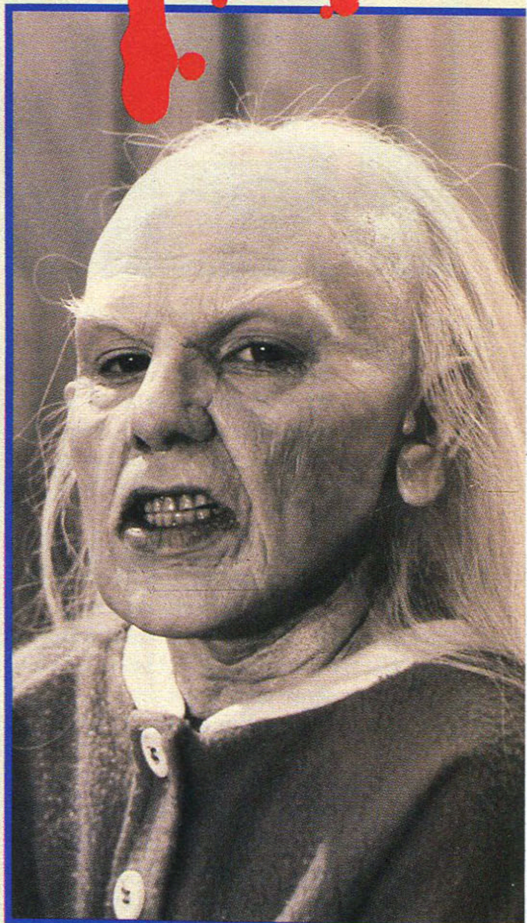
Hello? Oh, you again! Nice to see you here at the lab. It's been a couple of months since you were here last. I thought we were going to have to drag the canal for your body.

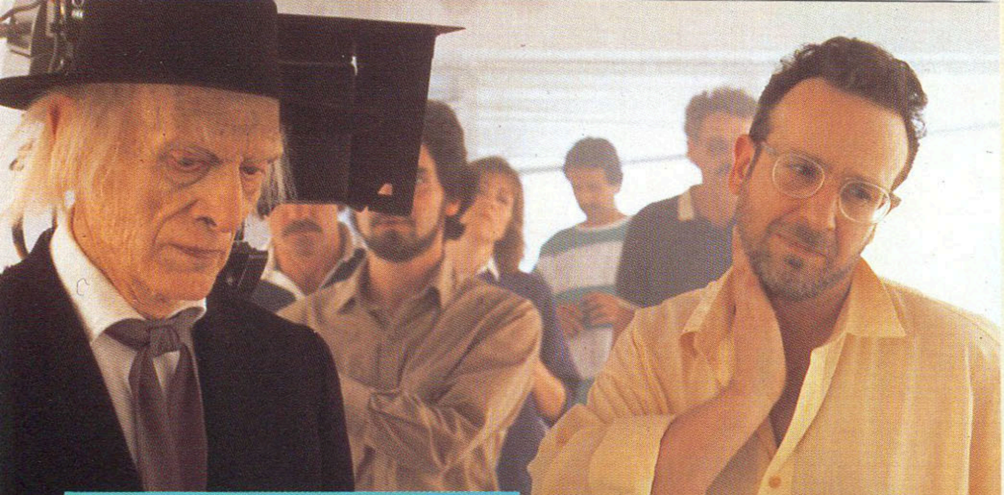
Smell that aroma? Yep, we've been cooking foam latex for the past several days now. Got a call from Dick Smith down in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He's there working on *Everybody's All American*, some subtle aging makeups for Dennis Quaid and Timothy Hutton. Apparently, *All American*'s going a few days over schedule, and Dick needs some additional appliances.

The lab's empty today, just you and me. Glad you could make it; I've been wanting to clue you in on what's shaking with *Poltergeist III*. While you were gone, MGM shot a new climax to its Spielberg-instigated spook show carried on by director Gary Sherman, and we were invited.

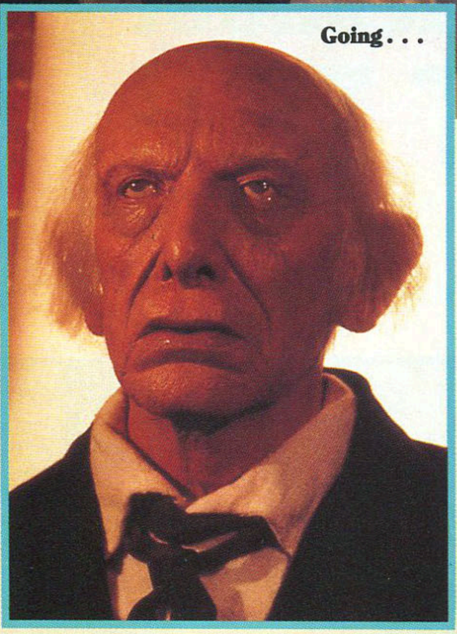
With only 12 days of prep, it was imperative that we move quickly. As usual, John Caglione rose to the occasion, fabricating two impressive dessicated corpses in record time. Meanwhile, Anthony Fredrickson and I readied the articulated Kane puppet head, designed to actually mummify in front of the Panavision lens. Gary Sherman, being a good gadfly, requested that this be done without undercranking the camera or the use of any stop motion.

This on-camera mummification would be accomplished by placing a

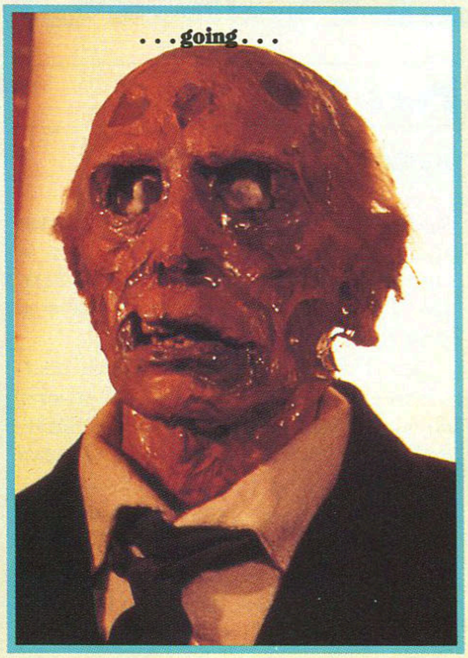

Stage Four of Carol Anne's transfiguration into Kane, sculpted by Dick Smith, application by Kevin Haney with Stephan Dupuis. Contact lenses, dentures (upper and lower), hair work by Bill Urban of Bob Kelly's.



The Devil and Gary Sherman.



Going . . .



. . . going . . .

micro-thin wax shell of actor Nate Davis' face over the corpse-like visage sculpted by Dick Smith. When subjected to 600,000 BTUs of heat, the shell would collapse and dissipate, leaving behind a skinlike membrane of PAX paint, which in effect vacuum-formed itself over the articulated face.

We packed and got ready to go. TWA tickets arrived promptly via Federal Express. Ambassador Class, non-stop. All the comforts of home and then some as the wheels of the L-1011 kissed Mother Earth goodbye and leapt into the chill night sky of New York City, bearing the three of us toward the agreeable clime of Southern California.

In LA, we saw more ghosts on Hollywood Boulevard, entombed behind bronze stars and pink granite, than anywhere in our collective careers. We felt the impressions of their presence in the court of historic Mann's, and if we changed the spectrum of our vision for just a moment, we would see them standing vigilant in the eerie twilight.

At a catty-corner across the street from Mann's Chinese Theater stood the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. At great cost, the Roosevelt had recently been restored to its opulent 1930s-style splendor, reflecting the then-buoyant atmosphere of Hollywood. As we entered its cavernous lobby, the melody of Duke Ellington's "Mooche" underscored the dry California evening. John, Anthony and I surveyed the vault of a ceiling disjointed in time.

At 6:00 a.m., we're on the set. The air is crisp and electric blue. The craft service truck serves coffee. A production assistant whizzes by, carrying a one-liner sheet and turning about as she passes, still moving in a straight line, announces, "Nate's gonna be later, more like 10:00. Did you get those director's chairs and lights? How 'bout one of these?" She waves the one-liner.

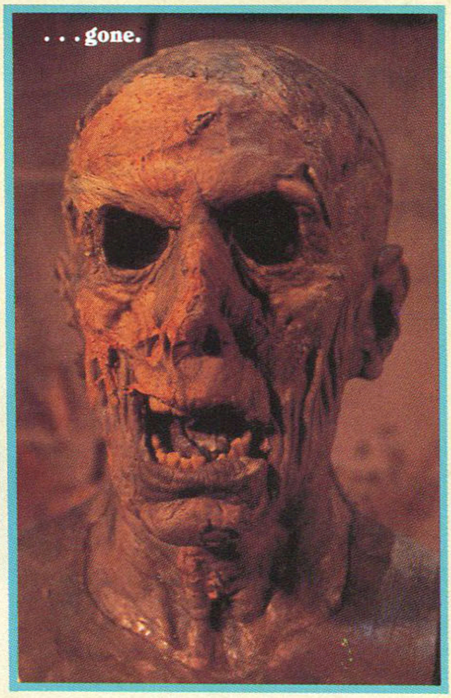
"From back to front," I answer, smiling. "Yes, yes, yes, and that's when we start the clock. We get three hours from the point Nate is in the chair."

"Three hours?" she says doubtfully, recording every word I say, like RoboCop. I smile.

John signals from the whitewashed walls of the makeup department that the mime double for Nancy Allen arrives at 6:30. She is to be mummified. Beautiful! She's late, and Nate's not in till 10:00. Originally, we thought both makeups would have to be done simultaneously. Now the heat was off. Prosthetically speaking, things were simmering nicely. This was like a paid vacation in Hollywood.

Turning the concrete corner two steps at a time, we enter the relative darkness of the makeup room, a 12-foot square cubicle with a wall of mirror bisected by formica counter top and sink. The opposing wall is a large window overlooking one of many backlot alleys. John punches the air conditioner on. It sputters to life.

The platform stands about five feet above the surface of stage B, 15 by 15, a lattice of plywood and fairing strip. Directly above, suspended by block and tackle, four 150,000-BTU propane Salamanders are bundled together like some bastard mockery of the space shut-



. . . gone.

tle. In 72 hours, we ride the stack.

Standing in the shadows, I weigh the elements of an effect hustled together in 12 days. It is a patchwork of plastic, silicone and metal. It must perform *flawlessly*.

Anthony fussed with the eye mechanism. That was his obsession, a marvel of retrofitting and out-of-the-box ingenuity. He shifted the hi-temp epoxy substructure slightly, allowing light to spill into its handcrafted interior. Left to right, up and down and complete retract. Retractability serves a two-fold purpose: First, it complements the withering effect of the puppet head, and second, it frees the mechanism from the confines of the skull to afford fumble-free servicing.

Days on the set pass smoothly. Kane's makeup applied by John is perfect. Mary Hogan has once again undergone gruelling rubber transformation as Nancy Allen's mummified mime double. Yesterday, in her moment of vengeance, Nancy whacked the villainous preacher's head clean off his shoulders. Today, we burn it to the ground.

Stage B is a flurry of activity. The platform representing the floor of Carol Anne's room is the center of attention. Anthony and I mount the Kane puppet head to the floor, oblivious to the maelstrom of activity all around. Electricians and grips set lights and heavy power cables. The Panavision is hoisted up onto the platform and secured. Barriers are mounted around the perimeter of the stage to contain the dry ice fog. Director of photography Alex Nepomniaschy begins lining up his shot, while Gary Sherman stands nearby, conferring with John Caglione. Huge brutes sprint to life and energize the stage with the brilliance of a hundred suns. You can practically hear the electricity surge.

"How much time, Drex?" Sherman inquires.

"Fifteen minutes, Gary! Anthony, let's see some eye movement, some jaw. Rock the head, yeah . . . less is more . . . better . . . Fine! OK, we're set here."

Cal Acord's FX guys move in and begin to pack dry ice around the head. Dry ice will not create a puddle of liquid when the heaters are fired. As the Salamanders are lowered, the fog begins to roll in.

Beneath the platform, Anthony and I take our positions. The video hookup portrays a ghostly representation of what the camera sees. A production assistant passes us a walkie-talkie, as the crew in anticipation gathers around their own monitor. John stands up on the platform with gritted teeth, knowing full well that the moment of truth has arrived.

Anthony and I are submerged in adrenalin and dry ice. Looking up into the mechanism of the head, he takes the eye controls, while my hand, swathed in fire resistant material, stays inside the skull in order to manipulate the mouth. We expect the heat to be terrific.

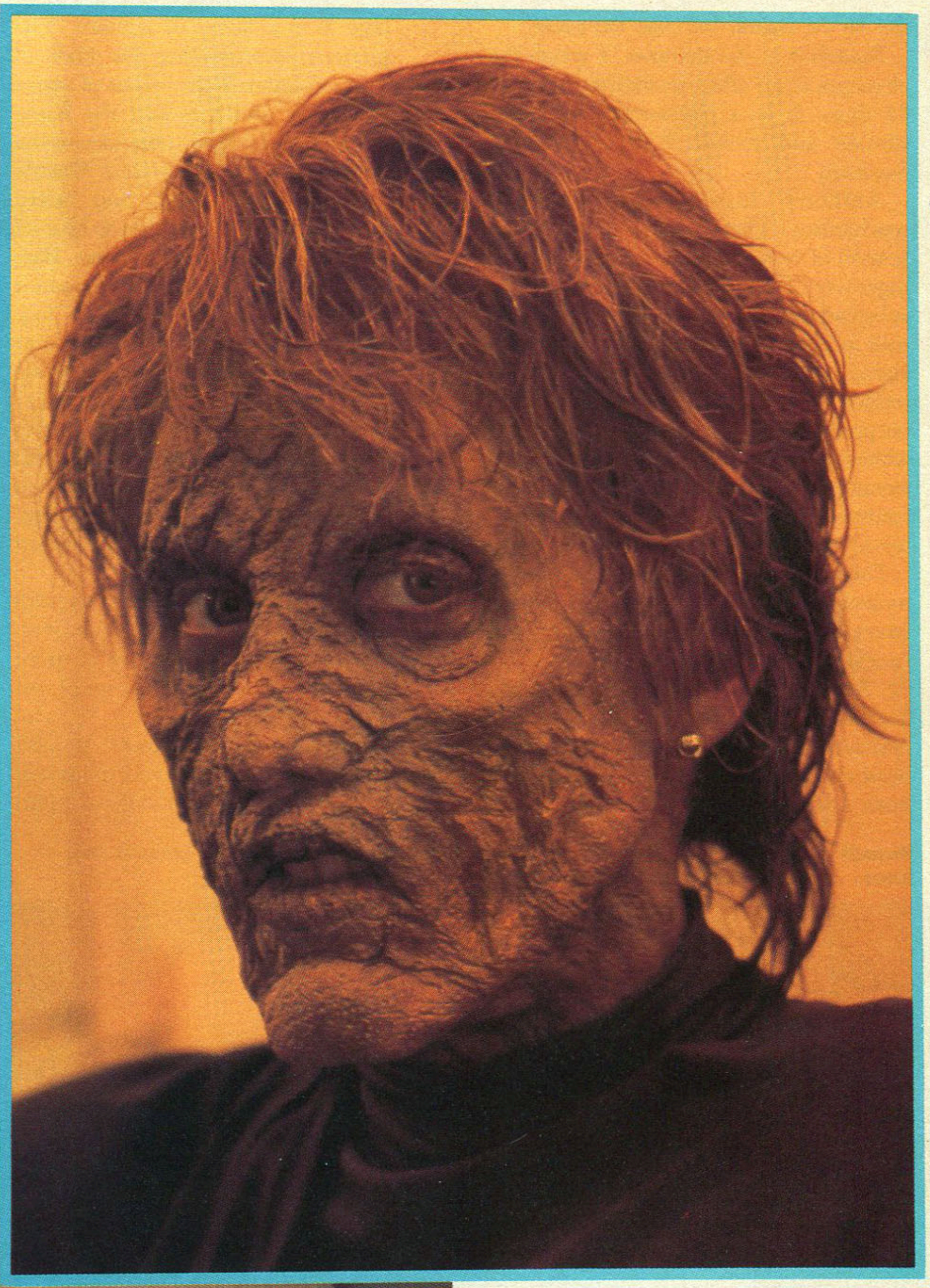
The walkie-talkie crackles to life when Gary requests quiet on the set. "Do not swing the Salamanders over the face until I give the word! Anthony, Doug—Stand by! Cal—*Fire up the Salamanders*!"

We hear the turbine-like fans in each heater spin to life as the propane-fed combustion chamber ignites with a bloodcurdling *WOOOSH*! The first one lights. Then *WOOOSH*! *WOOOSH*!—the second and third.

Russell Todd of *High Mountain Rangers* fame visits his old high school pal, Kane . . . er, I mean John Caglione.

I weigh the elements of an effect hustled together in 12 days. . . It must perform *flawlessly*.

Mary Hogan, Nancy Allen's mime double for the great "mirror reveal," in makeup sculpted by Caglione, applied by Drexler.



"That's the fourth!" yells Cal, over the din.

"OK!" responds Gary at the top of his lungs. "Anthony and Doug, are you set?"

"Set!" we cry. The tension is thrilling.

"Roll the camera!"

"Camera is rolling!"

"Cal! Swing in the Salamanders!!"

Nancy Allen whacked the villainous preacher's head clean off his shoulders. Today, we burn it to the ground.

As the heaters are brought to bear, a blast of hot air and molten wax bursts through the openings in the floor around the head. A splash of red-hot liquid sears my arm, but I am oblivious to it. Our eyes are glued to the monitor, where we see the ghostly, dreamlike image of the face begin to alter.

Kane's eyes roll in pain and disbelief as his skin begins to peel and draw tight across his evil countenance. His mouth quivers spasmodically, a hole in the rotting decay of his face. His entire head shudders and yawns, and with one last effort to swear an unholy oath, his mouth opens horrifically and emits a bloodcurdling scream.

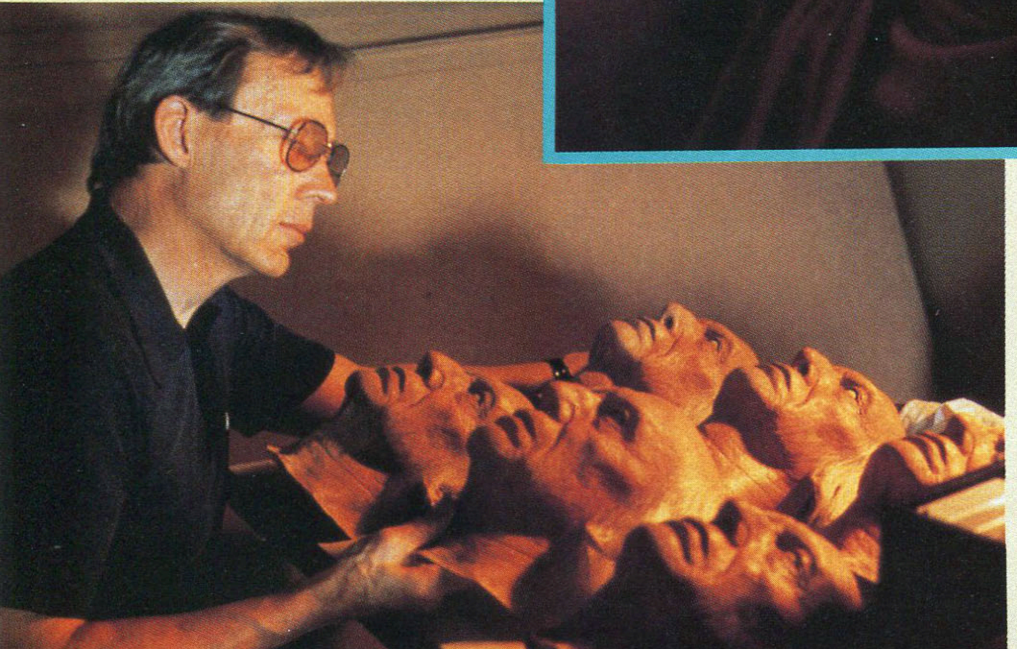
"*Cut!*"

The soundstage falls dead silent. They have seen something very strange here. Tentatively, at first, and then rolling with the relief of released tension, applause from the crew thunders amidst cheers.

"Beautiful!" crackles the director's voice over the walkie-talkie. "*It's a wrap!*"

Anthony and I look at each other, not quite sure where we are. John's head appears, upside-down over the side of the platform. A huge grin spreads across his face. "Let's go home!"

Dick Smith surveys his handiwork: six microthin wax shells to thermally collapse over an articulated corpse face.



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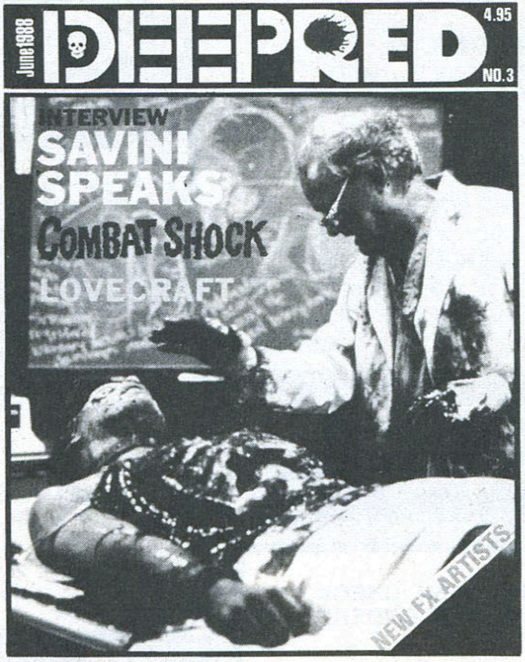
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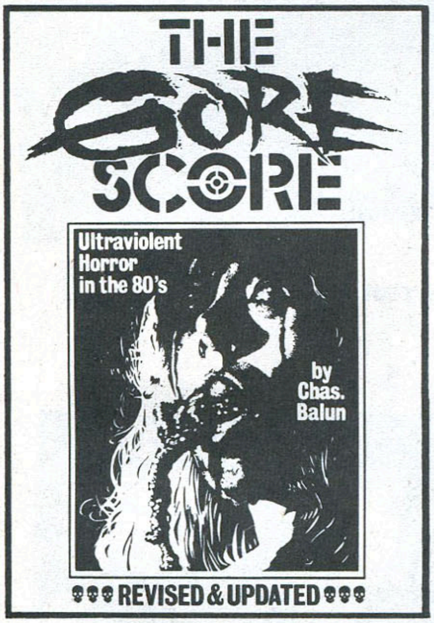
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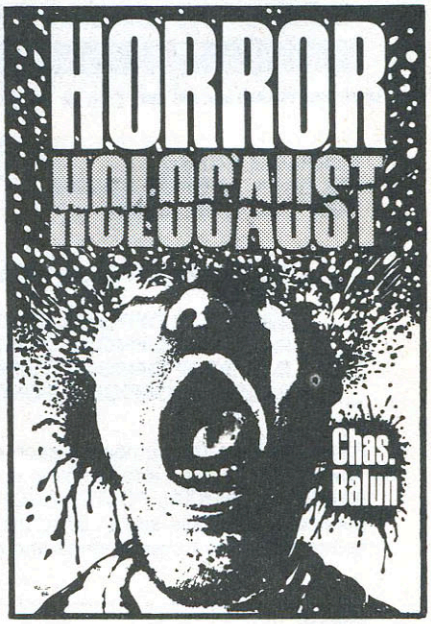
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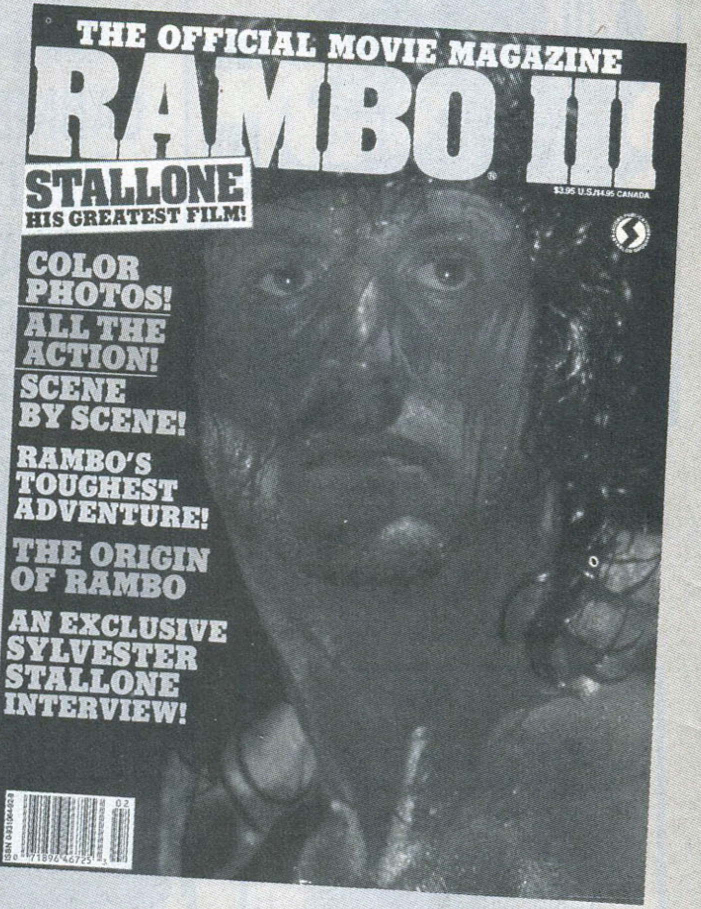
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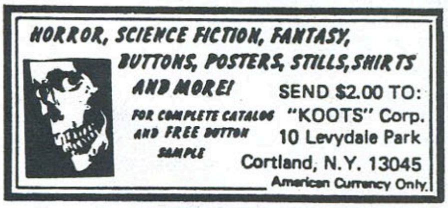

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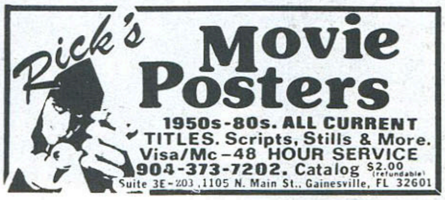

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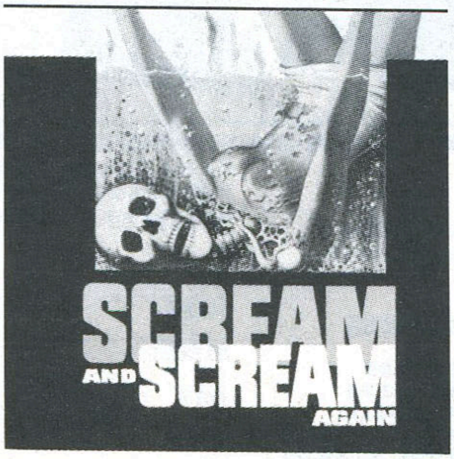

BLOB

(continued from page 22)

than I am by films about loss and depression. As spectacular as Carpenter's *The Thing* was—and it's one of his best pieces of work, an absolute tour de force—it left me feeling defeated. I wanted to walk out going, 'Yeah! We beat it!' "

It's not the subject matter of downbeat horror films that Russell objects to, it's the approach. "I'm not one of these people who say, 'This is not a horror film.' I *revel* in the fact that it's a horror film. I always get a kick out of that."

Russell has little patience with those who kid the films they're making. "It's essential to make a commitment," he asserts. "These pictures lose all tension if you make fun of them. A mistake some people make is to talk down to the genre. For me, these are the same guys that won't cop to the fact that they're making a horror film. I have to believe it. I want the audience to believe it, so *I* believe it. I scare myself when I write. There is humor in *The Blob*, but if the humor comes out of character, if it comes out of situation, and if it's not at the expense of the story and not at the expense of the movie's reality, then it works."

Throughout the interview, Russell has remained remarkably still, occasionally sitting forward, then leaning back, resting his feet on a drawer of the desk. He's tired, and has welcomed the opportunity to just sit and talk; now he becomes aware of the time and has to get back to the producer waiting anxiously in the other room.

"I'll keep wanting to come back to genre stuff," Russell avers. "It'll probably tend to be fantasy-oriented, as opposed to slasher films and things like that, but I have to admit I love scaring people. It's one of my favorite things to do. Making people scream or making them laugh is the most satisfying thing a filmmaker can do, because you can *hear* it when you sit in the audience."

On his way to leave, Russell can't resist adding a little more. Enthusiasm for the project at hand, he feels, is the key. " 'I would like to see this movie.' You have to feel that way to fight the whole battle. I'm very lucky to be making movies, and I'm not a pretentious guy. I'm working my ass off right now, hoping to thrill some people, and I've had a very hard time sitting down and telling you how great this is going to be. I'm making the movie now."

And with a last handshake, Chuck Russell leaves to do just that. ✸

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CRABS

(continued from page 55)

bench. . .

"Damn!" Mike groaned. "Those girls forgot to take back the chairs."

"Grab 'em," Steve told him. "We can use 'em tomorrow."

"Wait," said Bob. "Look here." He pointed to a crater near Karen's chair. Sand shifted to fill it, like grains of salt in an old-fashioned egg timer, but it was still a foot deep or more.

"Probably a dog digging," Mike grumbled. "People let 'em out at night around here." He prodded displacing sand into the hole.

Steve picked up one of the chairs, felt something sticky on the bottom of his shoe. He picked it off—a Band-Aid, gooey with sand-encrusted blood—and tossed it absently into the pit, now almost filled.

Bob held up the lantern and spotted two empty bottles. Wine coolers. The girls had been drinking these. . .

The hair rose on the back of his neck. He ignored it, too aware of the effects of his imagination. Leaning over with a grimace, he picked up the discarded bottles, one by one. He glanced warily around. Then he trudged after Mike and Steve, the moonlight catching the sheen from his water-repellent jacket.

He stopped for a moment, glanced back. Something out there, closing in, something evil, malevolent, watching. . .

No! His imagination again. He smiled to himself, then set his feet towards the house. He'd tell Dana what he'd thought just now. She'd get a good laugh.

Horror Headshrink

Kathie Ramsland first swept into my myopic field of vision while I was on my feet, addressing an attentive number of college-age writing students at an Eastern college, all ivy and moss. These people had never heard of your Bruce Springsteen or my Frank Sinatra; the Boss was Faulkner, maybe, and the Rat Pack went through mazes or died for a medical cause, involuntarily.

But they stopped being attentive, and so did I. All of us turned into kids with popping eyes. It's God's truth—mine, anyway—that I wondered why the smiling blonde student was late for my lecture.

Two things happened at that point: First, I decided I didn't care, because it was enough for such a comely, obviously intelligent woman to attend and hear my pearls of wisdom. Then, in a soft voice that could break hearts but never glass, "I'm Katherine Ramsland," she said, "and I'm sorry I'm late. You must be Jerry Williamson."

Riiight, yeah, I thought, *I must be*. I was even glad of that.

And for several more moments, I believed it was a con, a joke. Because *my* Katherine Ramsland wrote an in-depth psychological study about why people read or write horror for my nonfiction anthology from Writer's Digest Books and a yarn for my *Masques II* collection so cunning that readers who should've figured it out are still scratching where the two hemispheres of their brains won't quite close. *My* corresponding Kathie held an MA in clinical psychology, a BA in experimental psych. Her PhD in philosophy made her *Doctor* Katherine Ramsland and a Rutgers prof, so she was—I assumed as charitably as possible—a prune.

Wrong, assumption-wise. The awestruck students, the other professional writing types gathered that spring day at Moravian College, my wife and I were about to become better acquainted with an ex-motorcycling former acting student with the sort of insight to say, in her *How to Write Tales of Horror, Fantasy and Science Fiction* article, that horror fans have "the spirit that took David out to meet Goliath—the urge to issue a challenge to something beyond themselves, which may be more horrifying than they can bear, and then to return intact," and to observe that such fiction "serves an important function in our attempt to achieve personal authenticity," because it "preserves us."

Heavy, but right. Just as it's heavy to hold the general assumption that straight young women can't write this kind of fiction, when there are writers scaring the tar out of us, such as Bari Wood, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Jeannette W. Hopper, C. J. Davis, Tabitha King, Jessica Salmonson, Audrey Parente, Diane Taylor, Katherine Ptacek, Melanie Tem, Mona Clee, Janet Fox, Susan Lilas Wiggs, Jay Sheckley, Melissa Ball, Elizabeth Massie, A.R. Morlan, Ardath Mayhar, Colleen Drippe, Joan Vander Putten, Cheryl Sayre, Kathleen Jurgens and Denise Dumars—heavy but, in this instance, dead wrong.

As you will learn when you read K.M. Ramsland's "The Drinking Party," in *Masque III* (St. Martin's Press, 1989) and the wriggling horrors ahead of you in the form of "Ghost Crabs."

—*J.N. Williamson*

K.M. Ramsland

FUTURE SHOCK

It's GOREZONE's first Halloween issue! Holy Great Pumpkin, is *this* ever going to be a blast. Of course, the big story is HALLOWEEN IV, which boasts the inspiring subtitle *The Return of Michael Meyers*. Yep, Shape fans, you heard it here first, so be on hand when we drop by the set to chat with the FX crew in Salt Lake City.

Then there's the new gang down in Hades. HELLBOUND: HELLRAISER II features Ashley Laurence and Clare Higgins with new director Tony Randel, new screenwriter Peter Atkins and new FX talent Geoff Portass. Should we tremble in anticipation of an inferior imitation? *No*! Clive Barker serves as executive producer and provided the original story. Here's your chance to see someone do a sequel right.

Say, have you been poring over these pages in search of the CHILD'S PLAY piece we promised last issue? Guess what—it's not here. They decided to release the movie for Halloween. Naturally, we rescheduled our coverage accordingly. Next issue will give you the lowdown on director Tom (*Fright Night*) Holland's return to the genre.

To round out all these tricks and treats, we've got reviews and previews of the autumn film lineup, the FX revelations of Caglione & Drexler and new fiction by James Kisner.

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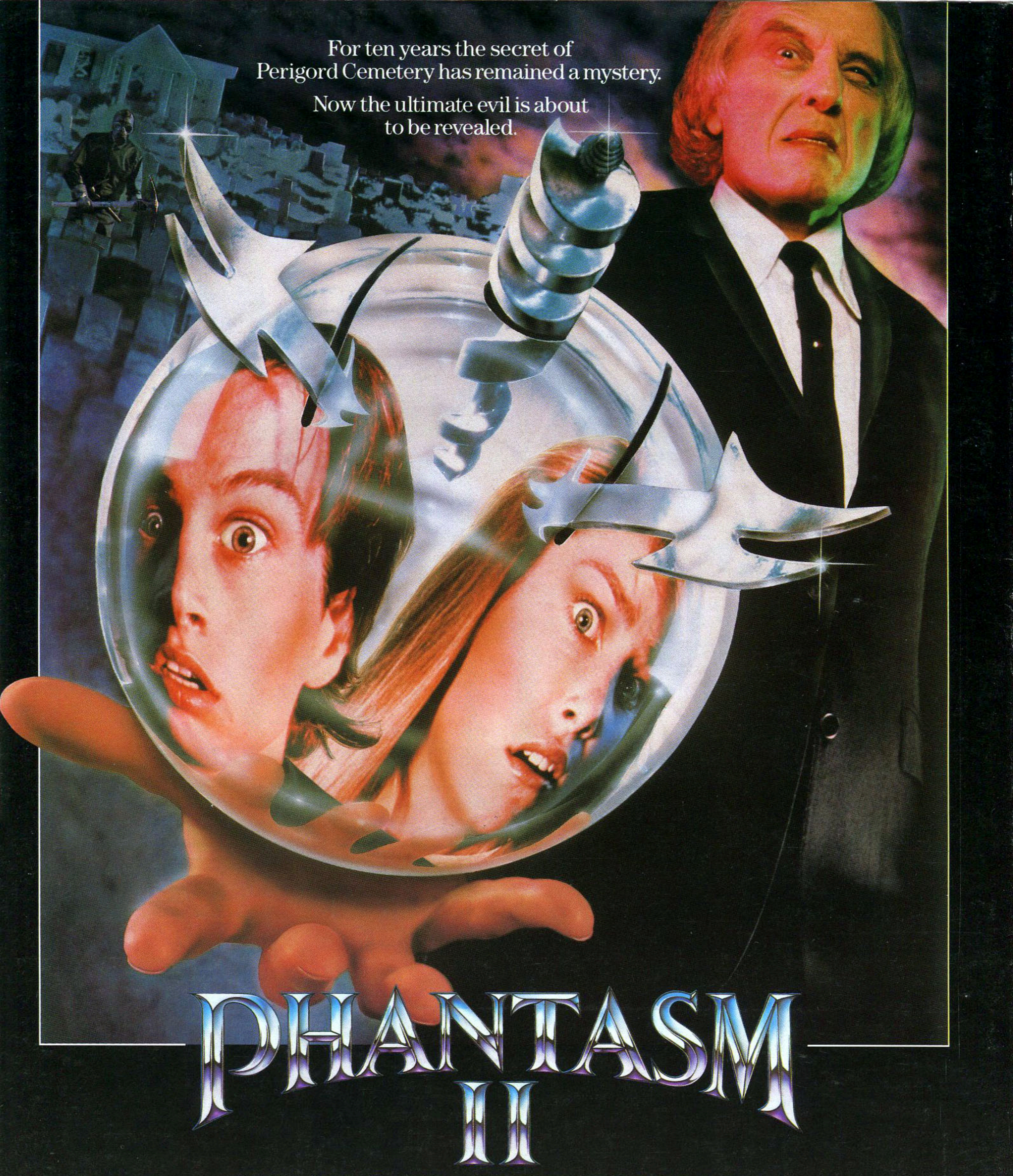
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